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# The Making of Ras Beirut: A Landscape of Memory for Narratives of Exceptionalism

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“THE MAKING OF RAS BEIRUT:  
A LANDSCAPE OF MEMORY FOR NARRATIVES OF EXCEPTIONALISM, 1870-  
1975.”

A Dissertation Presented

by

MARIA B. ABUNNASR

Submitted to the Graduate School of the  
University of Massachusetts Amherst in partial fulfillment  
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Department of History



**“THE MAKING OF RAS BEIRUT: LANDSCAPE OF MEMORY FOR  
NARRATIVES OF EXCEPTIONALISM, 1870-1975”**

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MARIA B. ABUNNASR

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History Department



## **DEDICATION**

This dissertation is dedicated with love

to my parents, Catherine and Munir;

to my brother, Michael;

to my sons, Zayn and Jad;

and to my husband, Yaser.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This dissertation owes so much to the encouragement of so many in Ras Beirut and Amherst. I would like to thank my advisor, Mary C. Wilson, for her thoughtful support and the confidence she inspired in me throughout the years. Thanks are also due to my dissertation committee members: Gerald McFarland, who never doubted I would find my way; to David Glassberg who oversaw the embryonic beginnings of this project; and to Neil Silberman, whose comments and suggestions were always provided with passionate enthusiasm.

I would like to thank the invaluable guidance of many wonderful archivists. At Mount Holyoke College Archives, Patty Albright and Jenifer Gunter King, offered me support and made my year there as Scholar-in-Residence possible. At Amherst College Archives, Margaret Dakin was a pleasure to work with, always enlivening the archival experience. At AUB Jafet Library Archives, I would like to thank Samar Mikati for her helpful advice and Imane Abdallah for her warm enthusiasm.

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contagious excitement kept me going. Both Ellen Fleischmann and Betty Anderson provided wise and positive encouragement. Ussama Makdisi gave of his precious time whenever asked. Many friends tolerated my ramblings with kind attentiveness; among them Sumaya Baroody, Zeina Barakeh, Rula Theodory, Jen Mactaggart, Colin Chant, Delphine Garde, Randa Cardwell, Hibah Osman, Sumaya Kubeisy, Ramla Khalidy, Bethany Millard, Taryn and Ray LaRaja, Scott and Sarah Auerbach, Carleen and Henry Basler-Chang. I surely failed to mention others, and for that I apologize.

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## ABSTRACT

“THE MAKING OF RAS BEIRUT:  
A LANDSCAPE OF MEMORY FOR NARRATIVES OF EXCEPTIONALISM,  
1870-1975.”

SEPTEMBER 2013

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This dissertation examines the memory of Ras Beirut and the various claims to its exceptionalism. I frame its history as a landscape of memory born of the convergence of narratives of exceptionalism. On the one hand, Ras Beirut’s landscape inspired Anglo-American missionary future providence such that they chose it as the site of their *college on a hill*, the Syrian Protestant College (SPC, later renamed the American University of Beirut [AUB]). On the other hand, the memory of Ras Beirut’s “golden age” before the outbreak of the Lebanese Civil War in 1975 inspired longings for a vanished past to Ras Beirut’s oldest inhabitants. Shaped by the push of prospect and the pull of recollection, Ras Beirut emerges as a place formed out of the contest of these overlapping articulations of exceptionalism. Moreover, Ras Beirut’s narratives have a wider significance and application in their transnational and interconfessional relevance. The missionary New England microcosm of the SPC represented the transnational transposition of memory onto Ras Beirut in an architectural narrative of exceptionalism. The monumental size and scale of their buildings oriented Ras Beirut and realized a

“city upon a hill.” Drawing from letters written to and from the US, I examine their ambiguous relationship to Ras Beirut that made them both part of the place and apart from the people. At the same time, the local Muslim-Christian community of Ras Beirut argued that Ras Beirut’s distinct character rested on their own history of harmonious coexistence. In the early twentieth century, Arab Protestant converts settled in Ras Beirut and became known as the Protestants of Ras Beirut in their affixed identity and collective rootedness to place. This dissertation draws upon archival research and tangible sources in the changing architectural and urban environment. It also relies on oral history and memory to capture the multi-disciplinary making of place that best relates the textured history of Ras Beirut while giving meaning to everyday lived lives. In the process, the connections between the Middle East and the US unfold in transnational terms while the idea of Ras Beirut as a paradigm of coexistence unfolds in interconfessional terms.

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## NOTE ON TRANSLITERATION, TRANSLATION, AND DATES

I have used a modified version of the style of the *International Journal for Middle East Studies (IJMES)* for transliteration of all Arabic terms, with minimal diacritics. Only those diacritical marks indicating the hamza (') and the 'ayn (‘) are used here. In references, I have retained the spelling of names (or their correct transliteration).

For family and place names I have kept their known common English spelling in the case of places and kept the family names spelt the way they spell them in English (for example, Cortas instead of Qurtas).

All Arabic words have been italicized. All dates are indicated according to the Common Era calendar (C.E.). All translations are mine unless otherwise indicated.

# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

### **Ras Beirut as a Product of Narratives of Exceptionalism**

“Even the sun in Ras Beirut is different,” declared Kamal Rebeiz, the late *mukhtar* of Ras Beirut.<sup>1</sup> Perhaps outrageous, Rebeiz’s claim is a familiar refrain among Ras Beirut’s oldest inhabitants. Many places inspire assertions of exceptionalism in the minds of their inhabitants, but what give Ras Beirut’s claims wider significance is their extension over time and across the space of memory

This dissertation frames the history of Ras Beirut as a landscape of memory born of the convergence of narratives of exceptionalism. It begins in the late nineteenth century with the providence Ras Beirut’s landscape inspired in Anglo-American missionary educators such that they chose it as the site of their “college on a hill,” the Syrian Protestant College (SPC, later renamed the American University of Beirut [AUB]). It ends in the late twentieth century with the memory of Ras Beirut’s pre-Lebanese Civil War “golden age” in the minds of its local inhabitants. Shaped by the push of prospect and the pull of recollection, Ras Beirut emerges as a place formed out of the contest of these overlapping articulations of and identifications with exceptionalism. While the phrase “landscape of memory” is most often employed in literary, art

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<sup>1</sup> Kamal Girji Rebeiz, interviewed in film by Mahmoud Hojeij, *Memories of Ras Beirut* (Beirut, Lebanon: 2006), DVD. The literal translation from colloquial Lebanese dialect to English is: The sun in Ras Beirut has a different flavor [*al shams fi Ras Beirut ilha ghayr naka*]. The position of *mukhtar* has no English equivalent but can be defined as an elected quarter leader or state functionary elected by the people of the quarter for a renewable term of six years. Michael Johnson, *Class and Client in Beirut* (London: Ithaca Press, 1986), 95. There is more than one mukhtar per quarter. Ras Beirut currently has six mukhtars: four Sunni Muslim, one Greek Orthodox Christian, and one Druze.

historical, or landscape design contexts, here it is used to historicize the memory of Ras Beirut through the lived experience of three of its core communities: the Anglo-American community directly associated with the College, the Arab Protestant community who came to Ras Beirut to study and to work at the College, and the local Sunni Muslim-Greek Orthodox Christian community whose presence predated the college.

Although Ras Beirut existed before the missionary founding of the SPC, the completion of the first College buildings in the early 1870s reoriented Ras Beirut's landscape spatially, physically, and culturally. To its missionary founders the College vindicated their failed efforts at winning Protestant converts. They transposed their religious fervor onto a vision of Ras Beirut as a landscape of manifest destiny where they built a New England microcosm. To its local inhabitants, Ras Beirut's distinct character rested on the history of the timeless coexistence of its Muslim-Christian community. In their view, the missionaries chose Ras Beirut as the site of their college because of its remarkable tolerance. Ras Beirut's Sunni Muslim, Greek Orthodox Christian, and later Protestant community claimed Ras Beirut represented a unique example of harmonious interconfessionalism. By the outbreak of the Lebanese Civil War in 1975, the idea of Ras Beirut as a haven of liberal multiconfessionalism crystallized into the idealized portrait still remembered when Arab nationalism was at its height and the United States was largely admired and emulated throughout the region.

This dissertation understands Ras Beirut from simultaneous perspectives and temporalities through the bifocal lens of landscape and memory studies. Viewed from a distance outside in and from individual memory out, the broad contours of Ras Beirut's topography foreground the routine of the everyday lived lives of its communities. Ras

Beirut's layers of community memory, moreover, render it conceivable as a palimpsest where "multiple versions of events, of texts, of phenomena – as well as multiple interpretations – [are] written over each other – with each version still visible under the layers."<sup>2</sup> Its versions are not only legible but also tangible, in the shape of the landscape, audible, in the voice of oral narratives, and memorable in the dreams of its inhabitants.<sup>3</sup>

Ras Beirut is a place that emerged out of a multi-layered undertaking central to the American missionary endeavor, to the forming of Arab Protestant identity, and to the ideal of Muslim-Christian coexistence. From opposite ends of the temporal spectrum, this study links a nineteenth century Anglo-American missionary landscape of future prospect to a twentieth century Ras Beirut memory of an idealized past. Ras Beirut's history unfolds out of that bridge of transnational and interconfessional memory.

While the history of Beirut has been accorded much scholarly attention, Ras Beirut as a hub of educational enterprise relevant to Beirut, Lebanon, and the region has barely been addressed. Yet its contributions were formative and integral to the social and urban fabric of Beirut in the nineteenth and twentieth century, making it a place of convergence within the Ottoman Empire and later in the Lebanese State. This dissertation redresses the minimal attention on Ras Beirut as a node of cross-cultural significance.

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<sup>2</sup> Shelly Fisher Fishkin, "Redefinitions of Citizenship and Revisions of Cosmopolitanism - Transnational Perspectives: A Response and a Proposal," *Journal of Transnational American Studies*, 3 1 (2011): 7.

<sup>3</sup> Michel de Certeau also describes the relationship between memory and place in terms of a palimpsest, in *The Practice of Everyday Life*, trans. by Steven Rendall (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1984), 109.

### **Locating Ras Beirut in Space, Time, and Community**

Though there is no comprehensive history of Ras Beirut, Ras Beirut invokes a powerful sense of history in the minds of those who lived there. As David Glassberg suggests, a sense of history is tied to a sense of place defined in space, time, and community belonging. He reminds us of how in

Sensing history, we explore fundamental questions concerning personal and group identity. History locates us in space, with knowledge that helps us gain a sense of where we are [...] History locates us in time, with knowledge that helps us gain a sense of when we are, filling in gaps in our personal recollection and family stories that allow us to understand our place in a succession of past and future generations. And history locates us in society, with knowledge that helps us gain a sense of with whom we belong, connecting our personal experiences and memories with those of a larger community, region, and nation.<sup>4</sup>

Fueled by this powerful conviction, this history locates Ras Beirut in space, time, and community.

On paper Ras Beirut's boundaries are quite arbitrary. Based on the most recent map issued by the Municipality of Beirut, the city is divided into sixty quarters or sub-districts (*manatiq*) and twelve electoral districts (*maḥallat*) created during the French Mandate (1920-1946). These divisions and their terminology are surprisingly ambiguous. For example, Ras Beirut is both a quarter (number thirty-five) and an electoral district (number seven).<sup>5</sup> But the quarter of Ras Beirut is much smaller and entirely separate from the adjacent electoral district of Ras Beirut. The quarter of Ras Beirut is one of three quarters included within the borders of the electoral district of Dar Mreisseh (number nine). And the electoral district of Ras Beirut includes seven other quarters but not the

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<sup>4</sup> David Glassberg, "Sense of History," *The Public Historian*, 19 2 (Spring 1997): 72; David Glassberg, *Sense of History* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2001).

<sup>5</sup> Map of Beirut, Beirut Municipality, 2012.



quarter of Ras Beirut. Definitions of Ras Beirut also vary according to popular opinion. Some include the quarter of ‘Ayn Mreisseh (part of the electoral district of Dar Mreisseh) in the definition of Ras Beirut; others include the quarter of Rawsheh as part of Ras Beirut and still others use the term “Hamra,” Ras Beirut’s most famous street and a quarter, conterminously with Ras Beirut.<sup>6</sup>

Topographic descriptors are arguably a more discernable way of defining Ras Beirut. The word *r’as* in Arabic means head. It is used to describe places in relation to physical geography, such as where a spring fonts as in *Ras el Naba’a*, or designates the flat top of a mountain as in *Ras el Metn*, or where the land juts into the sea as in *Ras Shamra* and *Ras Beirut*. Ras Beirut is the rounded promontory of the western-most extension of the peninsula of Beirut. On the western edge of this promontory are steep cliffs falling precipitously to the sea with its landmark rock formations known as *Pigeon Rocks*, in English, and *Sakhrat el Rawsheh* in Arabic. The southern side of Ras Beirut slopes down to a beach of sand swept in by prevailing southwesterly winds.<sup>7</sup> French poet and Orientalist, Alphonse de Lamartine captured popular fears of these encroaching sand dunes in his description of Ras Beirut in 1832 as a piece of the Egyptian desert scattered on the shores of Lebanon.<sup>8</sup> On Ras Beirut’s northern side, the ridge of the promontory

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<sup>6</sup> Per Kongstad and Samir Khalaf, *Hamra of Beirut: A Case of Rapid Urbanization* (Leiden: Brill, 1973); Aseel Sawalha, *Reconstructing Beirut: Memory and Space in a Postwar Arab City* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2010).

<sup>7</sup> Michael F. Davie, “Maps and the Historical Topography of Beirut,” *Berytus*, 35 (1987).

<sup>8</sup> Alphonse de Lamartine, *Voyage en Orient*, v.1 (Paris: Librairie Hachette, 1910), 449 [*C’est un morceau du désert d’Égypte jeté au pied du Liban*]. He relates that Arabs claim this red sand was not blown in by the wind or accumulated by the waves but was vomited by an underground torrent connected to the deserts of Gaza and El-Arish. These sand springs were likened to water springs thus explaining the redness of the sand in contrast to the white sands of the beach of *ramlet al-bayda*.

lowers into a narrow flat plain on sea level. Photographs of Ras Beirut in the 1930s show that its buildings tended to face north to take protection from the southerly winds, and from the sunrise in the east and sunset in the west. Based on a combination of official, popular, and topographical associations, this project locates Ras Beirut as the western most extension of the city. According to the Beirut municipality map this would include the quarters of Ras Beirut (35), Jama'a (the university) (31), Manara (the lighthouse) (36), Hamra (34), and part of Ayn Mreisseh (30) (Figure 1).

Ras Beirut's location also explains its history. Ras Beirut's exposure and topography made it relatively inaccessible compared to the sheltered port city of ancient Beirut to its east. The distance of Ras Beirut from other parts of the city kept its few inhabitants relatively isolated and invested them with a sense of difference. Ras Beirut's vantage point, overlooking the sea on one side and looking up towards the mountains (Mount Lebanon range) on the other, personified its ethos of open-mindedness so often cited by its inhabitants. Ras Beirut's location, moreover, also explains why the Anglo-American missionary establishment of the Syrian Protestant College (SPC/AUB) there and how it anchored Ras Beirut's spatial and social orientation (Figure 2). Over the course of the twentieth century, the SPC, turned AUB in 1920, attracted a cluster of other American educational institutions such as the American Community School that grew out of the college's faculty school in 1905, the American Junior College for Women in 1927, the (American) Near East School of Theology in 1932, and the American College for Boys originally located in Izmir which merged with AUB's preparatory school in 1936.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Today the Lebanese American University (LAU) and the International College (IC) respectively.

From the late nineteenth century until the present, Ras Beirut became synonymous with education, and specifically an American style education.

This history also defines Ras Beirut in time. As such, this project takes 1870 as its starting point with the construction of the SPC's first buildings, which outlined the built landscape of Ras Beirut for the next century, and ends in 1975 with the eruption of the Lebanese Civil War (1975-1990). At the same time, 1975 does not so much delineate the end of this period as much as it marks the end of Ras Beirut "as it was before the war" in the memory of its narrators. In these years that saw convulsive change in authority from Ottoman rule to French mandate control to Lebanese independent nation-state to the outbreak of the War in 1975, Ras Beirut transformed from a small interconfessional village of farmers, fishermen, and craftsmen who lived on the periphery of the city to a multi-confessional and transnational center of educational opportunity. Though some argue that the College created Ras Beirut and others that Ras Beirut created the College, most agree that the founding of the SPC in Ras Beirut catalyzed its transformation into a center of transnational and cross-cultural engagement that determined its mentality and social make-up.

This history, finally, locates who Ras Beirut is through its focus on three communities who represent its interconfessional and transnational character: the small Anglo-American community that settled around the College, the Arab Protestant community who built their lives in Ras Beirut, and the older Greek Orthodox Christian and Sunni Muslim community whose presence predated both. (Ras Beirut's demographic mix also included an old Druze community of Jal el Bahr, a tiny Maronite Christian community, and after 1948 a middle class Palestinian community whose integral histories

lie outside the parameters of this dissertation and are subject to future research.) In short, Ras Beirut's population mirrored the demographics of the city of Beirut as a whole. Sunnis were the largest Muslim sect, followed by the much smaller Druze and Shi'ite sects. The Greek Orthodox were the largest Christian sect, followed by the Maronites, the Greek Catholics, and small numbers of Protestants.<sup>10</sup> Across the urban landscape of Beirut religious groups distributed themselves into neighborhoods defined by confession. Basta, for example, was a Muslim quarter, while Achrafieh was a predominantly Christian one. Some neighborhoods of the city were more heterogeneous in religious composition, like Musaytbeh, Mazra'a, and Zuqaq al-Blat.<sup>11</sup> But Ras Beirut's inhabitants most vociferously claim that Ras Beirut is different not only because of its interconfessional make-up, but more importantly because of the history of harmonious coexistence between them. This distinction is what Ras Beirutis assert sets them apart from the rest, and in other words, underlines their exceptionalism. Who Ras Beirut is and how they remember their history through their narratives of exceptionalism is fundamental to Ras Beirut's collective memory and sense of history.

A Who's Who in Ras Beirut brings up the imprecise nature of group designation in the cross-cultural, interconfessional encounter that Ras Beirut staged. But for the purposes of clarity a few broad definitions are useful. Though cumbersome, the term "Anglo-American" is specific to the white Protestant missionaries from the United States and who were for the most part of English descent. The Anglo-Americans referred to the

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<sup>10</sup> Leila Fawaz, *Merchants and Migrants in Nineteenth Century Beirut* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1983): 131. From 1838 to 1922, the proportion of Muslims to Christians in Beirut ranged from 29-47% Muslim to 45-66% Christian.

<sup>11</sup> Michael Johnson, *Class and Client in Beirut the Sunni Muslim Community and the Lebanese State, 1840-1985* (London: Ithaca Press, 1986).

locals of Ras Beirut, especially in the nineteenth century, disparagingly as “natives.” They also used the term “Syrian” in reference to locals as subjects, and later citizens, of the Ottoman Province of Syria of which Beirut historically was a part.<sup>12</sup> Indeed, up until the 1920s and in common parlance, Beirut still considered itself part of Syria. Today the unequivocal association of “Syria/Syrian” with the nation-state of Syria makes the term “Arab” preferable. Arab, though broad, at least designates a common language and heritage, though not religion as it applies to Muslims, Christians, and Jews. As such this dissertation alternates between the use of the terms “local,” “Arab” (especially in discussion of Arab converts or Arab Protestants), and more specifically “Ras Beirut” to refer to those whose ancestors were of the region and to differentiate them from the Anglo-Americans of Ras Beirut. This raises the question of origins and what makes a Ras Beirut from Ras Beirut? Several Anglo-Americans were born in Ras Beirut and several died there.<sup>13</sup> Many Ras Beirutis would include the longest standing inhabitants of the Anglo-American community in their definition of Ras Beirut.

### **Ras Beirut’s Exceptionalism**

Despite Ras Beirut’s strong sense of history, little has been written of it. Samir Khalaf and Per Konstad’s sociological study on the rapid urbanization Hamra, Ras Beirut’s central artery, makes useful but brief mention of Ras Beirut’s history.<sup>14</sup> The

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<sup>12</sup> Ottoman province of Syria included present-day Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Palestine/Israel.

<sup>13</sup> According to L. Banks in “The Anglo-American Cemetery in Beirut: An Account of its History and Occupants,” (n.p. 18 May 1999), 385 names are recorded on the cemetery roster. Many returned to the U.S. before their death, so those buried in Beirut would be a fraction of the whole community.

<sup>14</sup> Kongstad and Khalaf, *Hamra*.

same can be said of Khalaf's introductory essay on the relationship between Ras Beirut and the SPC/AUB in a published collection of photographs taken at the turn of the century by an SPC Anglo-American missionary medical doctor.<sup>15</sup> Indeed, Ras Beirut appears most frequently in snapshots of personal memoirs. Only Kamal Rubeiz, the late *mukhtar* (or locally elected representative) of Ras Beirut, wrote a popular, folkloric history of Ras Beirut that includes invaluable sketches and recollections of many inhabitants now deceased.<sup>16</sup>

At odds with the dearth of historical sources is the persistence of a living memory of Ras Beirut, suggesting a powerful need for 'the past' perhaps to be able to survive the present.<sup>17</sup> The predominant association in the minds of its inhabitants with an idealization of religious tolerance suggests that Ras Beirut is the site and subject of claims of exceptionalism, as a space as well as population. In a representative example, in a comment on the polarization of Beirut along sectarian lines during the Lebanese Civil War (1975-1990), the late Ghassan Tuani famously remarked that there were three

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<sup>15</sup> Samir Khalaf, "AUB and Ras Beirut: An Idyllic Twinship," *The Moore Collection; Franklin T. Moore Photographs (1892-1902)*, ed. Helen Khal (Beirut: American University of Beirut Press, 2006), 12 - 24.

<sup>16</sup> Kamal G. Rebeiz, *Rizqallah 'ala haydeek al-ayyam...ya ras bāyruṭ* (Beirut: al-matbu'at al mussawarat, 1986). Many references to Ras Beirut are found in Lebanese historian Kamal Salibi's memoir, *Ta'ir 'ala sindiyana; mudhakirat* (Amman: Dar al Sharuq, 2002); A chapter entitled "The Republic of Ras Beirut" in Munir Shama'a's memoir, *Ikla wa hubut: siret tabib min rās bayrut* (Beirut: Riad al-Rayess Books, 2000, 2008); Mona Baroody Damlugi, *Awraq min umran maktub; dhikrayat* (Beirut: Dar Nelson, 2012); Hayat Labban al-Noueiry, *Ras Bayrut kama ariftuhu* (Beirut: al-Shirka al-Alaymiyyah li-lkitab, 2004); Wadad Cortas *A World I Loved: The Story of an Arab Woman*, (New York: Nation Books, 2009); Shereen Khairallah, *Lest We Forget* (Beirut: Dar Nelson, 2009); Najwa Shaheen Haffar *We Once Were Like That: A Memoir* (Beirut, Seattle, Los Angeles, Vienna: Ameera Publishing, 2012).

<sup>17</sup> Susan A. Crane writes extensively about "historical consciousness" as an awareness of "what we want and need from 'the past'" in Susan A. Crane, "Writing the Individual Back into Collective Memory," *American Historical Review* 102 5 (Dec. 1997): 1379.

Beirut: Christian East Beirut, Muslim West Beirut and Ras Beirut, the latter defying any confessional categorization.<sup>18</sup>

This insistence on Ras Beirut's exceptionalism, moreover, persists in local memory to the extent that it has become an *idée fixe* in the minds of its eldest residents regardless of confession. Further, the portrayal of Ras Beirut as exceptional within both Beirut and Lebanon perpetuates the representation of the enduring clichés of Beirut, as the cosmopolitan Paris, or of Lebanon, as the multi-confessional mountainous Switzerland, of the Middle East.<sup>19</sup> The attachment to the idea of Ras Beirut's exceptionalism, free of confessional tension and open to all, situates it in relation to the discourse on American exceptionalism which until recently dominated the historiography of the United States.<sup>20</sup> Indeed, just as U.S. historians presented the U.S., unscathed by authoritarianism and class conflict as a model to be emulated by the world, Ras Beirut's image of Muslim-Christian solidarity, that survived the fifteen-year Civil War, is often portrayed as an ideal microcosm of the "real" Lebanon.

In his memoir Munir Shama'a, a third generation Ras Beirut inhabitant, goes as far as to define Ras Beirut as an independent state, in Arabic a *dawla*, "of small size,

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<sup>18</sup> Ghassan Tueni (1926 – 2012) headed one of Lebanon's leading newspapers (and was son of its founder) *An-Nahar*; he was also a prominent Lebanese spokesperson, journalist, academic, and politician.

<sup>19</sup> C. Nagel, "Reconstructing space, re-creating memory: sectarian politics and urban development in post-war Beirut," *Political Geography* 21 (2002): 717.

<sup>20</sup> Ian Tyrrell, "American Exceptionalism in an Age of International History," *AHR Forum*, *American Historical Review*, 96 4 (Oct. 1991). Dorothy Ross, "Grand Narrative in American Historical Writing: From Romance to Uncertainty," *American Historical Review* 100 3 (Jun., 1995).

large impact, a pioneer in liberty, justice, equality, and democracy.”<sup>21</sup> Perhaps unwittingly, his definition of Ras Beirut fits squarely into the definition of American exceptionalism as “American uniqueness [...] a blessed and even providential nation, one charged with a distinctive role in advancing the cause of liberty, equality, democracy, and prosperity in the modern world.”<sup>22</sup> In this sense, these local assertions of Ras Beirut’s exceptionalism find historical precedence in Anglo-American missionary attitudes. Anglo-American missionaries arguably personify the central tenants of American exceptionalism, in their “claim[s] to uniqueness” and their “embrace of a task or mission” in a global sense.<sup>23</sup> In the context of Ras Beirut, Anglo-American missionaries and their descendents expressed this attitude in the architecture of the SPC meant to inspire awe and wonder in monumental size and shape. The Anglo-Americans who lived in Ras Beirut staged their self-contained lives in relation to the built and the natural landscape, emphasizing the uniqueness of their educational mission and their attachment to the land over the people.

Local assertions of exceptionalism are as consistent. Arguably the act of conversion itself, from Greek Orthodox Christianity (most Protestants converted from Orthodox Christianity) to Protestantism, marked a personal act of exception from an original community for both religious and practical reasons. Though not all together severed from their original community, converts excepted themselves from their origins. In their collective attachment to Ras Beirut as “the container of experiences” they

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<sup>21</sup> Shama‘a, 101-114.

<sup>22</sup> Patrick J. Deneen, “Cities of Man on a Hill,” *American Political Thought: A Journal of Ideas, Institutions, and Culture*, vol. 1 (Spring 2012), 29.

<sup>23</sup> James W. Ceaser, “The Origins and Character of American Exceptionalism,” *American Political Thought*, 1 1 (Spring 2012), 8-9.



described their lives as local pioneers in exceptional terms.<sup>24</sup> In turn, the way local Christian and Muslim inhabitants of Ras Beirut use memory to emphasize their distinct interconfessional harmony is also arguably a form of exceptionalism. In their written and oral narratives of coexistence they conjure up a social landscape unique in time and place – where neither class status nor wealth mattered and where they lived as one big family.

However, the term exceptionalism needs qualification. Whereas a sense of cultural and racial superiority inhered to the conception of Anglo-American exceptionalism, a sense of alienation and loss haunts local expressions of exceptionalism. Some members of Ras Beirut's small Protestant community certainly saw their choice to convert to Protestantism as an example of setting themselves apart from their past in socio-religious terms. Others viewed conversion as a practical means to self-improvement through education, opportunity, and security in a very unstable time. Local Muslim-Christian claims of exceptionalism are attached to a longing for an older more predictable way of life disrupted by the Lebanese Civil War. This dissertation uses these manifold narratives of exceptionalism to weave the memory of and identification with Ras Beirut together into a history of local and transnational relevance.

### **Relevant Historiography**

#### **Beirut in the Nineteenth Century**

Ras Beirut grew out of Beirut's urbanization boom in the nineteenth century. Archaeological findings attest to Beirut's continued settlement from the Bronze Age through the Hellenistic and Roman Eras, then named *Berytus*, on to the successive

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<sup>24</sup> Edward Casey, *Remembering: A Phenomenological Study* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986), 186.

Byzantine and Islamic Empires.<sup>25</sup> But compared to its coastal counterparts such as Izmir, Sidon, and Acre, Beirut played a secondary role in the Eastern Mediterranean until the first third of the nineteenth century. Then Beirut's population numbered only 6,000 inhabitants compared to Izmir's 140,000; by the 1840s, its population doubled and by the end of the century it increased twenty fold to 120,000.<sup>26</sup> By all accounts, the 1830s marked the beginning of Beirut's rise as the principal seaport in the Ottoman province of Syria.

The rise of Beirut as an urban center is the subject of much scholarly attention.<sup>27</sup> Leila Fawaz focuses on Beirut's demographic growth and internal migration between the Mountain (Mount Lebanon) and the city. She examines the rise and fall of commercial and economic fortunes resulting from a combination of local, regional, and external factors. Michael Johnson analyzes the concomitant rise in political power of Beirut's Muslim Sunni bourgeoisie and its relationship with the emerging Lebanese state. May Davie emphasizes Beirut's urban expansion beyond the ancient fortified walls and its integration with the surrounding neighborhoods throughout the nineteenth and into the twentieth century. And most recently, Jens Hanssen examines Beirut's local and regional

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<sup>25</sup>See Nina Jidejian, *Beirut Through the Ages* (Beirut: Dar al-Mashreq, 1973) for a popular history based on archeological findings; Also Michael Davie, "Maps."

<sup>26</sup> Aleksandra Majstorac-Kobiljski, "Learning to be Modern: American Missionary Colleges in Beirut and Kyoto, 1860-1920" (PhD diss., City University of New York, 2010), 23-25. Kamal Salibi, "Beirut under the Young Turks as depicted in the Political Memorials of Salim 'Ali Salam (1868-1938)," in *Les Arabes par leurs archives (XVIe-XXe siècles)*, eds. Jacques Berque et Dominique Chevallier (Paris: Editions du Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, 1976), 194.

<sup>27</sup> Samir Kassir, *Beirut*, trans. M.B. DeBevoise (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010).

significance as a provincial capital of a new eponymous province of the Ottoman Empire at the turn of the twentieth century.<sup>28</sup>

Most historians cite (Ibrahim Pasha) Egypt's invasion and occupation of Syria in 1831 as the primary catalyst of Beirut's growth. Unlike Acre, which resisted and then was crushed by the invading Egyptian armies, Beirut accommodated the Egyptians.<sup>29</sup> Supplanting Acre, Beirut became the regional port-city and center of a thriving silk industry. Its exports to France and England, moreover, made it a commercial and diplomatic base for European interests. In response, Ottoman administrative reforms recognized Beirut's new position making it capital of the province of Sidon in 1840. At the same time, intermittent conflict in the Mountain from the 1840s to the early 1860s significantly impacted Beirut's demographic composition. Whereas the Mountain historically served the city as a refuge from Ottoman authority in particular, the war of 1860 reversed the situation. Indeed, the war between the Christians and the Druzes of Mount Lebanon caused a flood of Christian refugees to swell Beirut's Christian population to two thirds of the total.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Fawaz, *Merchants*; Johnson, *Class*; May Davie, *Beyrouth et Ses Faubourgs (1840-1940): Une Intégration Inachevée*. 15 Collection des Etudes Urbaines. (Beirut: Centre d'Etudes et de Recherches sur le Moyen-Orient Contemporain, 1996); Jens Hanssen, *Fin de Siecle Beirut: The Making of an Ottoman Provincial Capital* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2005); Butrus al-Bustani, "Bāyruṭ" *Da'irat al-Ma'arif*, vol. V (Beirut: 1881): 749-753.

<sup>29</sup> Mahmoud Haddad, "The City, the Coast, the Mountain, and the Hinterland: Beirut's Commercial and Political Rivalries in the 19<sup>th</sup> and Early 20<sup>th</sup> Century," in *The Syrian Land: Processes of Integration and Fragmentation; Bilad al-Sham from the 18<sup>th</sup> to the 20<sup>th</sup> Century* eds. Thomas Philipp and Brigit Schaebler (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1998), 129-151. For a history of Acre, see Thomas Philipp, *Acre: The Rise and Fall of a Palestinian City, 1730-1831* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001).

<sup>30</sup> Fawaz, 49; According to Fawwaz Traboulsi, "immigration altered the city's sectarian composition, as most of the newcomers were Christians of all sects who, by the turn of the century, constituted at least 60% of its population." In Traboulsi, *A History of Modern Lebanon* (London: Pluto Press, 2007), 56.

After the war of 1860, the semi-autonomous provincial district, or *Mutasarrifiyya*, of Mount Lebanon was created and in 1864, the Ottoman Provincial Law included Beirut in the Ottoman Province of Syria with Damascus as its capital.<sup>31</sup> Beirut was separate from the *mutasarrifiyyah*, but mountain and city were intimately connected as places of refuge. The political elites of the mountain, moreover, continued to exert influence over their constituents even after they left the mountain to the city. Ties to village or town in the mountain were difficult to break even after the move to the city because of the complicated process involved in changing one's voter registration, the *sijil*, to the city.<sup>32</sup> To that extent, and especially among the Maronite Christians, who were "never fully at home in Beirut," the "ideologies of the mountain" prevailed in the city.<sup>33</sup>

In 1888 Beirut became capital city of the newly created coastal province (vilayet) of Beirut that lasted until the outbreak of the First World War.<sup>34</sup> In these years, from 1860 to 1914, the region experienced what Elgin Akarli referred to as "the Long Peace" in association with their stability and prosperity.<sup>35</sup> Indeed, this period saw the establishment of the SPC and the foundations of Ras Beirut's Anglo-American and Arab Protestant communities. In the early 1860s, the first telegraph line connected Beirut to Europe and

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<sup>31</sup> Kassir, *Beirut*, 111.

<sup>32</sup> Sune Haugbolle, *War and Memory in Lebanon* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 167.

<sup>33</sup> Albert Hourani, "Ideologies of the Mountain and the City," *Essays on the Crisis in Lebanon*, ed. Roger Owen (London: Ithaca Press, 1976), 36-40.

<sup>34</sup> Hanssen, *Fin*.

<sup>35</sup> Engin Akarli, *The Long Peace; Ottoman Lebanon, 1861-1920*, (London, Oxford: The Center for Lebanese Studies and IB Tauris, 1993).

the first paved (macadamized) road linked coastal Beirut to Damascus in the interior – reducing journey over the mountains from two days to twelve hours.<sup>36</sup> Ottoman centralization efforts extended into an establishment of an “infrastructure of power” that rendered both Damascus and Mount Lebanon dependent on Beirut for trade, investment, and communication.<sup>37</sup> The local entrepreneurial initiatives of the emerging mercantile class harnessed administrative reforms and European commercial interests contributing further to Beirut’s prosperity.<sup>38</sup>

This fifty-year period also saw Beirut’s emergence as a node of intellectual pursuit and knowledge production. Many of the luminaries associated with the *Nahda*, the Arab cultural revival of the nineteenth century, flocked to Beirut from the Mountain to establish schools, literary and scientific societies, and an array of print media in the form of newspapers, journals, periodicals, books, and encyclopedias. The most renowned Christian intellectuals, Butrus al-Bustani, Nasif al-Yaziji and his son Ibrahim, and Khalil Sarkis, mixed with leading Muslim intellectuals, Hussein Bayhum, Ahmad Abbas, and Yusuf al-Asir in the “education quarter” of Zokak el Blat immediately southwest of Beirut’s ancient center.<sup>39</sup> The quarter’s characterization as an intellectual hotbed also was bolstered by the arrival from Egypt preeminent Muslim reformers such as Muhammad

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<sup>36</sup> Hanssen, 39.

<sup>37</sup> Eugene Rogan, “Instant Communication: The Impact of the Telegraph in Ottoman Syria,” in *The Syrian Land: Processes of Integration and Fragmentation; Bilad al-Sham From the 18<sup>th</sup> to the 20<sup>th</sup> Century*, eds. Thomas Philipp and Brigit Schaebler (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1998), 113. Hanssen in general, but in Trabulsi chapter “Beirut, the Capital of Trade and Culture (1820-1928),” *A Modern History of Lebanon*.

<sup>38</sup> Fawaz; Hanssen, 7.

<sup>39</sup> Trabulsi, 65-66; Hanssen, “The Birth of an Education Quarter,” *History, Space, and Social Conflict in Beirut; the Quarter of Zokak el-Blat*, ed. by Hans Gebhardt et al. (Orient Institute Beirut: Beirut, 2005), 143-174.

Abduh who worked with Jamal-al-Din al Afghani and translated his work into Arabic. Zokak el Blat also served the Anglo-American missionary educators as a base from which to launch into the educational rivalry that characterized this era.

### **From Beirut to Ras Beirut as Anglo-American Missionary Center**

Anglo-American Protestant missionary work overseas began with the establishment American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM) in Boston, Massachusetts in 1810. When their first missionaries landed in Beirut in the early 1820s they were latecomers on the western missionary scene. Catholic missionaries of all denominations, particularly the Jesuits, had been active in the region since at least the seventeenth century and the Russian Orthodox since the eighteenth century. Indeed, they were too late to establish a foothold in Jerusalem when they arrived there in 1821.<sup>40</sup> Meant to be a temporary base, Beirut suited Anglo-American missionaries for practical purposes and became the permanent site of the Anglo-American Syria Mission of Ottoman Syria. Compared to Jerusalem, Beirut's increasingly busy port, well-established western consulates, and access to the cool heights of the mountains populated by what the missionaries called "nominal" Christians (in other words, Maronite and Greek Orthodox Christians) appealed to missionary sensibilities. By the time the Ottomans government granted the small Protestant community and "native" church *millet* status in 1850, giving them permission to build churches and schools, the Anglo-American Syrian Mission's headquarters in Beirut comprised a substantial walled compound with a church,

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<sup>40</sup> Abdul Latif Tibawi, *American Interests in Syria, A Study of Educational, Literary, and Religious Work, 1800-1901* (London: Clarendon Press, 1966) gives a thorough explanation of why Jerusalem was not an option for American missionaries. Heather Sharkey, "American Missionaries and the Middle East; A History Enmeshed," in *American Missionaries and the Middle East*, eds. Mehmet Ali Dogan and Heather Sharkey, (2001), xiv. .

cemetery, press, and school on the western edge of the center of the city.<sup>41</sup> These material investments, however, bore little fruit in conversion rates. The missionaries were hard pressed to justify the viability of the Syria Mission solely on the grounds of converts won as compared to the much larger numbers in East Asian and sub-Saharan African missionary fields.<sup>42</sup>

Instead, Anglo-American missionaries invented Beirut's Holy Land significance to grip American popular imagination and divert attention away from the dismal conversion rates and their failure to establish themselves in Jerusalem.<sup>43</sup> Long-standing and influential Anglo-American missionary William McClure Thomson (1806 – 1894) arrived in Beirut in 1833 and authored the widely acclaimed *The Land and the Book; Biblical Illustrations Drawn from the Manners and Customs, the Scenes and Scenery of The Holy Land* (1859).<sup>44</sup> More than any other missionary in the nineteenth century

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<sup>41</sup> Tibawi, *American*, 109. Recognition granted through British diplomatic intervention. Marwa ElShakry dates official firman to 1853 when Protestantism was declared an official civil and ecclesiastical community by imperial decree in "The Gospel of Science and American Evangelism in Late Ottoman Beirut," *Past and Present* 196 (August 2007), 189. Jean Said Makdisi describes them as a separate sect, or *millet*, with its own courts and leaders responsible for its tax collection in *Teta, Mother, and Me: Three Generations of Arab Women* (London: Saqi Books, 2005), 159. Also in Karen M. Kern "They Are Not Known to Us: The Ottomans, the Mormons, and the Protestants in the Late Ottoman Empire," in *American Missionaries and the Middle East*, eds. Dogan and Sharkey, 125.

<sup>42</sup> According to Ussama Makdisi, Syrian congregants numbered 317 in 1857 and 1,542 by 1881. *Faith Misplaced, The Broken Promise of U.S.-Arab Relations: 1820-2001* (New York: PublicAffairs, 2010), 49. Heather Sharkey, "American Missionaries in Ottoman Lands: Foundational Encounters," *Essays: Archaeologists and Missionaries*, An Exhibition at Penn Museum, September 26, 2010 – June 26, 2010. University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, <http://www.ottomanlands.com/essays/archaeologists-and-missionaries>, 6.

<sup>43</sup> Sharkey, *American Missionaries*, xx.

<sup>44</sup> Heleen Murre-Van den Berg, "W.M. Thomson's *The Land and the Book* (1859): Pilgrimage and Mission in Palestine," in *New Faith in Ancient Lands: Western Missions in the Middle East*

Thomson championed Beirut's centrality to the Anglo-American missionary endeavor. He attributed the lack of Beirut's mention in the Bible to "records which must once have existed, but are now forever lost."<sup>45</sup> Beirut's "locality" and "prospect" compensated for its lost history and testified to its past and present significance.<sup>46</sup> He anchored Beirut's Holy Land significance to its only Biblical feature: Mount Lebanon. He described the view,

As our steamer came bravely into harbor at early dawn, the scenery was beautiful, and even sublime. Good old Lebanon, with a diadem of stars around his snowy turban, looked for all the world like some august monarch of the universe, with his head in heaven and his feet upon the sea, and I could and did salute him with profound respect.<sup>47</sup>

Thomson expressed disbelief that the Apostles never visited Beirut, noting that, "it is not to be believed that a spot so admirably adapted for a great city should have been

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*in the Nineteenth and early Twentieth Centuries*, ed. Heleen Murre-Van den Berg (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2006), 43.

<sup>45</sup> William McClure Thomson, D.D., *The Land and the Book; or Biblical Illustrations Drawn from the Manners and Customs, the Scenes and Scenery of the Holy Land*, (New York: Harper & Brothers, Publishers, 1859). Murre-Van den Berg relates that the book went through eleven reprints and output was 200,000 copies, more than any other American book of its time except for *Uncle Tom's Cabin*.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid, 41.



neglected.”<sup>48</sup> Thomson made Beirut central to Anglo-American missionary work familiarizing it in sight and as a site of Holy Land significance to his U.S. audiences.<sup>49</sup>

Especially in the wake of the War of 1860, Anglo-American missionary activities in Beirut intensified. A hub of relief work, Beirut also became the site of contesting western missions of various denominations and nationalities, including English, French, and Prussian.<sup>50</sup> In this arena “American missionaries found themselves competing for customers not only with other Protestants but especially with the Jesuits, Syrian Catholics, Greek Orthodox, Maronites, Druzes and local Muslim and Ottoman schools.”<sup>51</sup> In his capacity as Acting Pastor of the Anglo-American Congregation of Beirut from 1860-1863, Thomson made the decisive proposition to the ABCFM that a college of higher education be established “at Beirut, or for the present, nowhere.”<sup>52</sup> Further, Beirut as a center of educational enterprise was “the only place in Syria where native and

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<sup>48</sup> Thomson, 43. Kongstad and Khalaf, 1, note “the earliest written information on Beirut is found in the Tel el-Amarna tablets discovered in Egypt in 1887. Beirut, like the rest of Phoenicia, had been under Egyptian rule since the 12<sup>th</sup> dynasty (1580 B.C. onwards), and the tablets constitute the correspondence between its vassal Ammunira and the Egyptian pharaohs. In the course of his letters he referred to the strong defenses of Beirut, the height of its position and the developed state of its industry and its richness.”

<sup>49</sup> W.J.T. Mitchell, *Landscape and Power*, (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2002), 1-2.

<sup>50</sup> Makdisi, *Faith*, 51.

<sup>51</sup> Elshakry writes that the missionaries warned in their argument for the establishment of the SPC that ‘all the various groups are vying with each other in finding Boarding Schools for their children and youth’ in “The Gospel of Science,” 189, fn 65. By 1883, students numbered 250 for every 1000 people in Beirut, six times as many compared to the surrounding regions of Lebanon and Syria (fn 64, 189). Uwe Kaminsky, “German ‘Home Mission’ Abroad: The *Orientarbeit* of the Deaconess Institution Kaiserswerth in the Ottoman Empire,” in *New Faith in Ancient Lands*, ed. Heleen Murre-van den Berg (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2006), 191-209.

<sup>52</sup> “Extract from a letter written by Dr. William Thomson, author of *The Land and the Book*,” Beirut, Jan. 2, 1863, Bliss Family Papers, Series 1: Daniel Bliss additions, Box 5, Folder 1, Archives and Special Collections, Amherst College, Amherst, Massachusetts (underline in the original).

foreign teachers, pupils and apparatus could be easily secured.”<sup>53</sup> Dependent on local appeal, they mandated that Arabic be the College’s exclusive language of instruction and “tutors and if possible professors” would be “chosen from among the ‘pious and educated natives’ and only the President and “one or more professors” would be American.<sup>54</sup> In original impetus, then, the SPC was meant to have a solid local presence.

However, within the first years of the College’s opening the reverse came about. Anglo-Americans missionary educators took over its administrative and faculty positions and in the next fifteen years shifted the official language of instruction from Arabic to English. Except for one member, the entire faculty was Anglo-American, creating a veritable Anglo-American island in Ras Beirut. The only SPC professor of local origin was John Wortabet (1825-1908), son of the first Armenian convert in 1826, Gregory Wortabet, and a “child of the mission.”<sup>55</sup> Wortabet’s Protestant upbringing, study of medicine, and rank as a medical missionary of the Scottish Free Church qualified his

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<sup>53</sup> A.L. Tibawi, “The Genesis and Early History of the Syrian Protestant College,” Part I, *Middle East Journal* 21 1 (Winter 1967).

<sup>54</sup> Tibawi, “Genesis,” Part I, 12-14. The Civil War of Mount Lebanon of 1860-1 caused the relocation to Beirut of thousands of refugees from the villages of Mount Lebanon; among them the Protestant converts who “sought refuge in the mission house in Beirut.” With the schools providing the only basis for the financial survival of the American mission, certain members of the mission broke away from the American Board policy to focus only on preaching, not teaching, to establish a college.

<sup>55</sup> Tibawi, “Genesis,” Part I, 7; A.L. Tibawi, “The Genesis and Early History of the Syrian Protestant College,” Part II, *Middle East Journal* 21 2 (Spring 1967): 199; Indeed, the disparity between “native and American members of the mission did not long remain unnoticed, especially by converts of the caliber of Bustani or by children of the mission of the stature of Wortabet. Native helpers were paid generally within the range of \$100-200, while the pay of an American missionary was \$1,000-1,500, and even higher for a medical missionary. Americans lived in spacious houses with domestic staff in towns, and spend the summer months on the mountains every year.” Tibawi, *American Interests*, 211.

appointment to the College faculty.<sup>56</sup> But his appointment was contentious. The College's Board of Managers objected to him "on the ground that he was not an American but a native of Syria." It seems William Thomson's intervention, declaring that "if the appointment of native professors is to be impossible simply because they are native, I must decline to have anything more to do with the college," secured Wortabet's position on the faculty.<sup>57</sup> The College certainly had a number of locals to choose from. Two of their first crop of graduates and particularly outstanding teachers, Yaqub Sarruf and Faris Nimr, were promised permanent positions on the faculty. However, these offers were rescinded in the wake of the controversial Lewis Affair in 1882.<sup>58</sup>

In 1882, when Professor of Chemistry and Geology Edwin R. Lewis mentioned Charles Darwin in his commencement address he elicited the outrage of the conservative members of SPC's faculty and its New York based Board of Trustees. They ultimately forced Lewis to resign and except for one member, the entire faculty of medicine,

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<sup>56</sup> Tibawi, "Genesis," Part II, 199. In a photograph of the seven members of the "Original Faculty of the Syrian Protestant College" Wortabet is the only non-Anglo-American pictured. Henry Harris Jessup, described as the pillar of the Syrian mission wrote, "I endeavored to persuade (Wortabet)...to accept the pastorship of the Beirut Church but he absolutely refused" in *Fifty-Three Years in Syria* (New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1910) Vol. 11, 781. For more on Wortabet as a missionary of the United Presbyterian Church of Scotland, see Christine B. Lindner, *Negotiating the Field: American Protestant Missionaries in Ottoman Syria, 1823 to 1860* (PhD Diss., University of Edinburgh, 2009).

<sup>57</sup> Jessup, *Fifty-Three Years*, Vol. I, 303-4.

<sup>58</sup> Murre-Van den Berg, "William McLure Thomson," 44. Thomson returned to the U.S. in 1876. Thomson pushed for Western colonial intervention in the region was not an Arab nationalist as made clear by both Murre-Van den Berg and Ussama Makdisi in "Reclaiming the Land of the Bible: Missionaries, Secularism, and Evangelical Modernity," *American Historical Review* 102 1997, 703-4.

including Wortabet, resigned in sympathy.<sup>59</sup> After 1883 candidates for any teaching position at the College had to sign a “Declaration of Principles,” which stipulated that faculty members adhere to the conservative definition of the evangelical and missionary aims of the college.<sup>60</sup> Without any explanation, the College administration also withdrew its offers of full appointment to Sarruf and Nimr. From that point until the first decade of the twentieth century no offers of full appointment were made to any Arab. Indeed, not until 1909 was Jabr Dumit appointed full professor of the SPC faculty, twenty-six years after John Wortabet. And not until 1920 did the College Faculty vote to remove the discriminating distinctions which prevented Arab professors from full voting privileges on the faculty.<sup>61</sup>

The SPC’s hiring policy bespoke an implicit racism that had adverse effects on the affairs of Anglo-American community of Ras Beirut and their ambiguous relationship to people and place, which is the subject of Chapter Three. In restricting faculty positions solely to Anglo-Americans, the Lewis Affair also arguably determined the delayed settlement of the Arab Protestant community in Ras Beirut as its founders comprised the College’s first local professors. The collective identity of the Arab Protestants community came to be inextricably associated with Ras Beirut, the subject of

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<sup>59</sup> Elshakry, “The Gospel of Science”; Shafik Jeha, *Darwin and the Crisis of 1882 in the Medical Department of the Syrian Protestant College*, trans. Sally Kaya, ed. Helen Khal (Beirut: American University of Beirut Press, 2004).

<sup>60</sup> “The Trustees desire to urge upon the Board of Managers the necessity of using the utmost caution in selecting candidates for any post of instruction in the College, not merely members of Evangelical Churches, but in full sympathy with the spiritual and missionary aims the College,” in Elshakry, “The Gospel,” 192.

<sup>61</sup> Edward Nickoley to Howard Sweetser Bliss, April 1, 1920; Edward Nickoley to David S. Dodge, Aug. 1, 1920. File 2 Box 2, Edward Nickoley Collection, 1920-1923, Archives and Special Collections, Jafet Library, American University of Beirut, Beirut, Lebanon.

Chapter Four. Both of these two communities, the Anglo-American and the Arab Protestant, grew out of the SPC and molded the shape of Ras Beirut.

### **Anglo-American Missionaries and Transnational History**

From their earliest overseas posts, missionaries chronicled their work in histories, autobiographies, and biographies, promoting above all their mission of disinterested benevolence.<sup>62</sup> In many ways, missionaries saw themselves as the embodiment of American exceptionalism in their self-conception as “a chosen people with a mission to perform” in the tradition of their Puritan forebears.<sup>63</sup> The self-proclaimed notoriety Anglo-American missionaries advertised and the prominence they achieved in Ras Beirut in their association with the College stand in stark contrast to American Historical Association (AHA) President John King Fairbank’s description of them as the “invisible man of American history” especially in their impact at home.<sup>64</sup> Indeed, as Ussama Makdisi notes, the ABCFM is not listed as an entry in Eric Foner and John A. Garraty’s

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<sup>62</sup> As secretary of the ABCFM from 1832 - 1866, Rufus Anderson was most prolific; among several of his works are: *Memorial Volume of the First Fifty Years of the ABCFM* (Boston: ABCFM, 1861), *Foreign Missions: Their Relations and Claims* (New York, 1869) and *History of the Missions of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions to the Oriental Churches* (Boston: Congregational Publishing Society, 1872); Edwin M. Bliss, *Encyclopedia of Missions*, 2 vols. (New York: Funk and Wagnalls 1891); William Strong, *The Story of the American Board, An Account of the First Hundred Years of the ABCFM* (Boston: The Pilgrim Press, 1910); James A. Field, *America and the Mediterranean World 1776-1882* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1969); David H. Finnie, *Pioneers East: The Early American Experience in the Middle East* (Cambridge, Ma: Harvard University Press, 1967); Three missionary authored narratives: W.M. Thomson, *The Land and the Book*; Isaac Bird, *Bible Work in Bible Lands* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication, 1872); and H.H. Jessup, *Fifty-Three Years*.

<sup>63</sup> Deneen, 30.

<sup>64</sup> John King Fairbank, “Assignment for the ‘70s,” *American Historical Review* 74.3 (February 1969): 877.

*The Reader's Companion to American History*, published in 1991.<sup>65</sup> On the other hand, some historians, such as Arthur Schlesinger Jr. denigrated missionaries by describing their actions as the “purposeful aggression by one culture against the ideas and values of another [...] a deadly assault on the central ideas and values in the lands to which they carried their evangelical crusade.”<sup>66</sup> Less incriminating is their depiction as “sentimental imperialists” who came to preach, teach, and heal, and who “became prime communicators of the one civilization back to the other” making them “inescapably catalytic agents.”<sup>67</sup> William Hutchison explains the reason is that,

The problem [has been] that the missionaries' stated purposes, while expressive of service and sacrifice, bespoke a supercilious and often demeaning attitude toward religions that the recipient peoples considered integral to their own cultures. The missionaries who embodied such complexities have seemed too admirable to be treated as villains, and yet too obtrusive and self-righteous to be embraced as heroes. The most common reaction, therefore, has been simple avoidance.<sup>68</sup>

Two decades before Hutchinson's diagnosis of the dearth of missionary historiography and in the context of the Middle East, historian Abdul Latif Tibawi set out to treat “the American mission as a human activity subject to canons of historical development, not as a providential phenomenon.”<sup>69</sup> A later generation of historians built on Tibawi's nuanced

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<sup>65</sup> Ussama Makdisi, *Artillery of Heaven* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2008), 221, n6.

<sup>66</sup> Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., “The Missionary Enterprise and Theories of Imperialism,” in *The Missionary Enterprise in China and America*, (1974): 360-363.

<sup>67</sup> James C. Thomson, Jr., Peter W. Stanley, John Curtis Perry, *Sentimental Imperialists: The American Experience in East Asia* (New York: Harper & Row, 1981): 45-46.

<sup>68</sup> Hutchison, *Errand*, 2.

<sup>69</sup> Tibawi, *American Interests*, 302.

understanding of the plurality of Anglo-American Protestant missionary work and local engagement in the Arab provinces of the Ottoman Empire.<sup>70</sup>

The transnational character of missionaries may explain their invisibility and exceptionalism in U.S. history. In their continuous movement between cultures, the history of overseas missionaries defies neat geographic categorization. If anything missionaries are agents of transnational history par excellence as missionary history is “the study of movements and forces that have cut across national boundaries” establishing a world wide web long before the virtual one of the present.<sup>71</sup> The most fruitful and engaging findings understand this history as one framed by the reciprocity of cultural exchange that brings to life stories on both sides of the encounter. As Dana Robert notes, “what tends to be overlooked in the history of missions is how the real experiences of missionaries in specific locations, and the concrete needs and interests of early converts, both challenged and shaped the missionary visions themselves.”<sup>72</sup> Heather Sharkey examines the impact of Anglo-American Protestant movement on the “massive, mutual, and ongoing transformations” in Egypt as a result of a century long cross-cultural encounter.<sup>73</sup> The seminal works of Ussama Makdisi explore the “foundational encounter”

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<sup>70</sup> Eleanor H. Tejirian and Reeva Spector Simon. *Altruism and Imperialism: Western Cultural and Religious Missions in the Middle East* (New York: Middle East Institute, Columbia University, 2002); Abbas Amanat & Magnus Bernhardson. *U.S.-Middle Eastern Historical Encounters: A Critical Survey* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2007).

<sup>71</sup> Akira Iriye, “Transnational History,” *Contemporary European History* 13 (2004): 213. Daniel Rodgers, *Atlantic Crossings: Social Politics in a Progressive Age* (Cambridge, Ma. and London, UK: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1998).

<sup>72</sup> Dana Robert, *Converting Colonialism: Visions and Realities in Mission History, 1706-1914*, (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans Publishing, 2008), 1.

<sup>73</sup> Heather Sharkey, *American Evangelicals in Egypt: Missionary Encounters in an Age of Empire*, (Princeton University Press, 2008), 1. Ellen Fleischmann, “I only wish I had a home on

between Anglo-American Protestant missionaries and the Arab World to explain the complex history of misunderstanding between the U.S. and the Middle East from the early nineteenth to the early twenty-first centuries.<sup>74</sup>

Central to transnational histories of missionary and local engagement is the story of unintended consequences. These cross-cultural encounters effected change not only on the local recipients of missionary culture but also changed the missionaries themselves in their necessary adaptation to outcomes completely different than expected as is so often pointed out in the founding of the SPC.<sup>75</sup> That the most successful Anglo-American Protestant missionary endeavor in the region, the SPC in Ras Beirut, was an institution of higher education is a manifestation of that necessary accommodation in defiance of home board injunctions to preach and not teach. Though they failed in their goal to “revive Christianity” they succeeded in sustaining themselves in the most “emotionally, culturally, and politically charged region” of the missionary world by redefining their aims, and indeed, adapting to local demands.<sup>76</sup>

To the inhabitants of the Ottoman Empire in the nineteenth century, the Anglo-American Protestant missionary personified America *in* the world. In the history of Ras Beirut, the Anglo-American missionary community represented one of its earliest communities. From a transnational perspective, the encounters between the U.S., represented by missionaries and their descendants, and the local inhabitants of Ras

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this globe’: Transnational Biography and Dr. Mary Eddy,” *Journal of Women’s History*, 21 3 (Fall 2009).

<sup>74</sup> Makdisi, *Artillery; Faith*.

<sup>75</sup> Majstorac-Kobiljski, *Learning*.

<sup>76</sup> Makdisi, “Reclaiming the Land,” 683, 689.



Beirut, represented by its interconfessional mix, created a place where both Arab history and American history were made.<sup>77</sup> One side of that encounter was ineluctably tied to the other in the making of Ras Beirut.

Ras Beirut's physical landscape provided Anglo-American missionaries fertile ground for their transnational aspirations in "the movement of peoples, ideas, technology, and institutions" and in the shape of the SPC/AUB that, in turn, accommodated local demands in order to survive.<sup>78</sup> This established Anglo-American presence in Ras Beirut, moreover, gave local communities a sense of their own significance. To them, the American missionaries chose Ras Beirut as the site for their college precisely *because* of the peaceful coexistence of its interconfessional community.<sup>79</sup>

This history of the making of Ras Beirut, then, understands America (the United States) and the Arab world as having a long, inextricable, mutually reinforcing and rewarding history reinforcing the actuality that "nations lie enmeshed in each others' history."<sup>80</sup> Ras Beirut's enmeshed history began from a cross-cultural encounter by way of more than a century of an Anglo-American presence and the astronomic growth of Beirut into a modern city.<sup>81</sup> As much as the missionaries appropriated the landscape for their own purposes, Beirutis appropriated the missionary endeavor and challenged missionary presumptions. Because of local demands Anglo-American missionary

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<sup>77</sup> Sharkey, "Foundational Encounters," 1.

<sup>78</sup> Ian Tyrrell, "What is transnational history?," *Ian Tyrrell Blog*, <http://iantyrrell.wordpress.com/what-is-transnational-history>.

<sup>79</sup> Mukhtar Michel Bekhazi, interview with author, September 15, 2012.

<sup>80</sup> Rodgers, *Atlantic Crossings*, 1.

<sup>81</sup> Sharkey, "American Missionaries," xv-xliii.

endeavors shifted from evangelical to educational work. Local Beirutis co-opted the missionary endeavor as cultural capital to enhance Beirut's political and economic status. In the process, Ras Beirut emerged as a nexus of cross-cultural exchange and educational enterprise of local and transnational significance.

This study on Ras Beirut complements those conducted on other Beirut quarters, such as Zokak el-Blat and Ayn el-Mreisseh. The edited volume of writings on Zokak el-Blat, a neighborhood to the south west of central Beirut, range in their multidisciplinary focus from local history, to architecture, and to threats to urban heritage in the face of post-war erasure.<sup>82</sup> Aseel Sawalha's study on Ayn el-Mreisseh, directly west of central Beirut, "is an ethnographic study of time, place, and memory in the aftermath of the devastating civil war that ravaged Beirut."<sup>83</sup> In common with these works, this project historicizes the multiple trajectories of Ras Beirut's communities in the shaping of a distinct neighborhood culture. At the same time, its encounter with the American foreign missionary movement situates Ras Beirut's history in a transnational context. In that process, it frames a shared history of Anglo-American, Arab Protestant, and Muslim-Christian significance and pertinence to the present.

### **Theoretical and Methodological Approaches:**

Within an interdisciplinary framework of landscape and memory studies, this dissertation explores how the image of Ras Beirut as an ideal microcosm materialized out of its intrinsic features: its natural topography and the memory its inhabitants associate

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<sup>82</sup> Gebhardt et al, *History, Space and Social Conflict in Beirut: the Quarter of Zokak el-Blat*.

<sup>83</sup> Sawalha, *Reconstructing Beirut*.

with it. Landscape is inherently related to memory; landscape is as multivalent as memory is ubiquitous. Memory sees landscape and landscape catalyzes memory. Landscape provides a view of memory and memory provides a view of the past through the lens of the present. The ideas of “landscape as a way of seeing”<sup>84</sup> and “landscape as history made visible” inform the approach to the multi-layered landscape of Ras Beirut.<sup>85</sup> Landscape plays a central role as a complex site of meaning that changes and accrues significance in time. Anthropologist Barbara Bender writes of the temporality of landscape as “time materializing” or “time passing” and landscape’s power to provoke memory especially in the blurring of the past with the present.<sup>86</sup>

In its “accumulated times” Ras Beirut served as the loci for an Anglo-American missionary endeavor, Arab Protestant rootedness, and Greek Orthodox Christian-Sunni Muslim narratives of coexistence.<sup>87</sup> Whereas the American missionaries who founded and settled around the college for generations looked forward to the building of a landscape of providential destiny, the pre-war Ras Beirutis generations look back with nostalgia on that same landscape as a place associated with a golden age of secular nationalism and interconfessional harmony. This convergence of the future plans with

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<sup>84</sup> Denis Cosgrove, *Social Formation and Symbolic Landscape* (NJ: Barnes & Nobles, 1984), 1.

<sup>85</sup> H.L. Horowitz in “J.B. Jackson and the Discovery of the American Landscape,” in JB Jackson, *Landscape in Sight: Looking at America* ed. Horowitz (New Haven, CT: Yale Univ., 1997), x.

<sup>86</sup> Barbara Bender, “Time and Landscape,” *Current Anthropology*, 4 (Supplement, August-October 2002): S103.

<sup>87</sup> de Certeau, *The Practice*, 108.

past claims encapsulates the dialogical relationship of landscape and memory so central to the making of Ras Beirut as “a repository of people’s memory.”<sup>88</sup>

Furthermore, “the interaction between vision and memory in the landscape is capable of generating narrative vision.”<sup>89</sup> Michel de Certeau views narratives or stories as integral to making places into memoryscapes.<sup>90</sup> People use stories to organize and make sense of their lives; in turn stories remembered in time and space reconstruct a history of place. Telling life stories is an individual act of remembering. But individual memory is “the product of group communication, intimately linked to a collective memory of the community.”<sup>91</sup> Maurice Halbwachs goes as far as to say that individual memory is entirely dependent on collective, or group memory, and eventually disappears when the group does.<sup>92</sup> The intersubjectivity of memory studies allows for the fine lines between past and present, individual and collective memory, and memory and identity to be discerned.<sup>93</sup> Through the close reading of and listening to personal narratives, whether memoirs, letters, or oral history conversations, this project understands how life stories

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<sup>88</sup> Barbara Misztal, *Theories of Social Remembering* (Philadelphia: Open University Press, 2003), 16.

<sup>89</sup> Jan Birksted, “Landscape between memory and experience,” *Landscapes of Memory Experience*, ed. Jan Birksted (London: Spoon Press, 2000), 3.

<sup>90</sup> Craig Larkin, *Memory and Conflict in Lebanon: Remembering and Forgetting the Past*, (New York: Routledge, 2012), 3.

<sup>91</sup> David Glassberg, “Public History and the Study of Memory,” *The Public Historian*, 18 2 (Spring 1996): 10.

<sup>92</sup> Lewis Coser, “Introduction,” in Maurice Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, edited and translated by Lewis A. Coser (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 22.

<sup>93</sup> Robert Perks and Alistair Thomson, eds. *The Oral History Reader* (London, New York: Routledge, 1998, 2006).

attached to Ras Beirut accrue into a “collective destiny” through memory’s “insistence on creating a history of itself.”<sup>94</sup>

Stories are integral to the making of Ras Beirut. Oral history is the most powerful medium of collecting them. While epistolary narratives and memoirs are rich sources of memory, the most dynamic ones, explored in Chapters Four and Five, are oral histories. Landscape, memory, time, and narrative converge through the practice of oral history. And yet, oral history’s reliance on the subjectivity of memory is often cited as its pitfall. In his seminal work *The Death of Luigi Trastulli*, Alessandro Portelli found that his narrators insisted on facts that made sense to their own personal narratives even when official records contradicted them. Portelli contends that oral history’s dependence on the fallibility of memory is not its weakness but instead its strength, as deeper meanings lie beneath the surface of the actual facts of memory.<sup>95</sup> In the case of Ras Beirut, even when specific instances of interconfessional coexistence are not verifiable, or are outright invented, the narrator’s insistence on them matters more to their ability to draw collective meaning from the past in the present.<sup>96</sup>

Personal narratives as conveyed through oral history also fill in the blanks of Ras Beirut’s unwritten history and give voice to its tellers. Susan Crane sees this “unique recounting of events not so much as they happened but as we remember and invent them

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<sup>94</sup> Mary Jo Maynes, Jennifer L. Pierce, and Barbara Laslett, *Telling Stories; The Use of Personal Narratives in the Social Sciences and History* (Ithaca, London: Cornell University Press, 2008), 3. Luisa Passerini, *Autobiography of a Generation: Italy 1968*, trans. Lisa Erdberg and forward by Joan Wallach Scott (Hanover, NH: Wesleyan University Press, 1996), 23.

<sup>95</sup> Alessandro Portelli, *The Death of Luigi Trastulli and Other Stories; Form and Meaning in Oral History* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1991), 2.

<sup>96</sup> Ronald J. Grele, “Oral History as Evidence,” in *Handbook of Oral History*, ed. Thomas L. Charlton, Lois E. Myers, and Rebecca Sharless (Lanham, MD: Altamira Press, 2006), 71.

– is also a definition of history.”<sup>97</sup> The use of oral history is critical because it provides “information about everyday life and insights into the mentalities of what are sometimes termed ‘ordinary people’ that are simply unavailable from more traditional sources.”<sup>98</sup> The voices of Ras Beirut’s pre-war past can still be heard, but are fading fast (five interviewees have passed away as of this writing).<sup>99</sup> As such, an integral purpose of this dissertation is to collect the voices of some of Ras Beirut’s oldest inhabitants and to contribute to recent scholarship in the field of culture and memory studies on Beirut and Lebanon.<sup>100</sup> The research of Chapters Four and Five in particular is based on approximately sixty interviews conducted with current inhabitants of Ras Beirut between the ages of sixty and ninety-five. These animated face-to-face encounters in the homes, offices, and small businesses with the descendants of some of Ras Beirut’s long-standing of Sunni Muslim, Protestant and Greek Orthodox Christian families, bring keen insights into community origin and place attachment. This dissertation historicizes memories of Ras Beirut through the powerful medium of oral history cognizant that recollections of the past are constituted by subsequent experiences.

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<sup>97</sup> Susan Crane, “(Not) Writing History: Rethinking the Intersections of Personal History and Commemorative Memory with Hans von Aufsess,” *History and Memory* 8 1 (Spring-Summer, 1996): 20-1.

<sup>98</sup> Linda Shopes, “Making Sense of Oral History,” Making Sense of Evidence series on History Matters: The U.S. Survey on the Web, located at <http://historymatters.gmu.edu>, 3.

<sup>99</sup> Kamal Rebeiz in 2009, Kamal Salibi and Angela Jurdak Khoury in 2011, Assem Salaam in 2012, Mounir Shama’a and Ra’if Nassif in 2013.

<sup>100</sup> For example: Sawalha, *Reconstructing*; Lucia Volk, *Memorials and Martyrs in Modern Lebanon* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2010); Franck Salameh, *Language, Memory, and Identity in the Middle East: The Case for Lebanon* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2010); Larkin, *Memory*; Haugbolle, *War*.

Even though the memories of Ras Beirut emerged out of entirely different community experiences and inter-relationships, whether Anglo-American, Arab Protestant, or local Muslim-Christian Ras Beiruti, their common ground in Ras Beirut fuses them together. Halbwachs's distinction between history as a record of difference and memory as a record of resemblances is critical in understanding how a place can be remembered in common and helps to illuminate continuity and change to describe a landscape of deeply shared pasts.<sup>101</sup> In light of the debate still surrounding the "correct" narrative of Lebanon's history, and the Lebanese Civil War in particular, memory lives with unresolved history.<sup>102</sup> Of these two routes to the past, however, history is a more difficult one because it involves contingency and empirical sources, including people's memories, that involve "hard work" and discrimination.<sup>103</sup> In comparison memory is a more accessible and personal route to understanding the past, especially a past fraught with recent conflict. In the context of Ras Beirut narratives of exceptionalism, the memory of coexistence disavows Lebanon's recent history of dissonance. Indeed, the memory of Ras Beirut is much stronger than its history.

### **Dissertation Chapters**

Each chapter of this dissertation represents a layer in the historicization of Ras Beirut's memory articulated through narratives of exceptionalism.

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<sup>101</sup> Maurice Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, edited and trans. by Lewis A. Coser (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992).

<sup>102</sup> Larkin, *Memory*.

<sup>103</sup> David Lowenthal, *The Past is a Foreign Country* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 212.

Following this introductory chapter, Chapter Two traces the early impacts of New England on the Ras Beirut landscape from 1870 to 1920 through an examination of the college campus and architecture. It argues that the SPC's architecture is a manifestation of an architectural narrative of exceptionalism transferred and reinterpreted from New England to Ras Beirut. The chapter historicizes the New England background of the Anglo-American missionary educators to contextualize their arrival to Ras Beirut in the early 1870s. Drawing from missionary writings, this chapter explores their views of Ras Beirut and how their New England imagination appropriated Ras Beirut. Central to this examination is how Anglo-American missionaries used landscape as a frame and memory as a lens to transpose an image of New England onto the landscape of the SPC. They articulated their view of the landscape of Ras Beirut in topographical and symbolic terms and then they literally built a language in stone to express their self-conceived exceptionalism in architectural terms. The architectural discourse of the College grounds complemented the deliberate significance attached to the landscape. The chapter opens with the momentous occasion of the corner-stone laying ceremony of the first building of the SPC (Syrian Protestant College, later American University of Beirut [AUB]) in 1870. Because the documentation of SPC's architectural history is sparse, this chapter uses architectural comparisons between the SPC and Princeton, Yale, and Amherst Colleges to demonstrate the enduring and tangible links between New England college landscapes and the SPC's Ras Beirut campus. This chapter argues that missionary attitudes of providential exceptionalism were consciously committed to the transformation of Ras Beirut into a New England city or *college on a hill*.



Chapter Three examines “The Anglo-American Lives of Ras Beirut” as a self-contained community network. This community represented one of Ras Beirut’s earliest communities in their settlement there since the 1870s with the founding of the College. While some mention is made of the first generation of Anglo-American missionaries, this chapter focuses on the second and third generations of modern missionaries (epitomized by Howard S. Bliss and Bayard Dodge) who were most comfortably ensconced in Ras Beirut in the first third of the twentieth century and who left a lasting impression on the place memory of Ras Beirut. This chapter draws its findings from a close reading of unpublished letters written by members of the community to examine the ambiguity of the Anglo-American relationship to people and place. On the one hand, these Anglo-Americans strongly imagined themselves as part and parcel of Ras Beirut’s physical landscape; they lived their lives against what they described as a backdrop of dramatic beauty. During World War I, they described Ras Beirut as the American quarter. Their Americanization of Ras Beirut reflected their identification with each other and with Ras Beirut. Their family and professional lives revolved in the academic and social cycles of the College schedule. On the other hand, they set themselves apart from Ras Beirut’s social landscape in their distance from what they termed interracial mixing with the local community. While they embraced the view of Ras Beirut with a passion, they drew clearly defined boundaries that prevented personal contact and interaction with the locals in social and professional terms. As the contradictory nature of their lives became more self-evident, their *look but don’t touch* attitude gradually shifted. This chapter illustrates the changing missionary mentality in the Anglo-American community that became more accommodating in the 1930s. Furthermore, despite the patronizing attitude Anglo-

Americans often harbored towards the local community, locals appropriated the memory of the Anglo-American community to give further substance to their claims of Ras Beirut's exceptionalism in transnational terms. Indeed, in Ras Beirut the memory of the Anglo-American community long outlasted their presence.

Chapter Four historicizes the formation of the Arab Protestant community, which became known as the "Protestants of Ras Beirut." This small group of local Protestant converts made Ras Beirut home in the first decade of the twentieth century. Perhaps more than any other community, they shaped the socio-cultural landscape of Ras Beirut for the next half century. The slow trickle of Syrian Arab converts to Ras Beirut from missionary school networks in the villages and towns surrounding Beirut to the SPC/AUB in Ras Beirut flowed into this community. If the SPC's landscape and architecture represented a tangible link between New England and Ras Beirut, then the "Ras Beirut Protestants" embodied a human one in their Protestant ways of life and socio-cultural attitudes of a local exceptionalism. This chapter draws some of its findings from a handful of Arab Protestant memoirs, but most from interviews conducted with the direct descendents of Ras Beirut's first generation of Protestant families. The small nucleus of Khawli, Makdisi, Dumit, Kurban, Jurdak, and Racy families were among the first Arab Protestants to settle in Ras Beirut. Through intermarriage with other Arab Protestants their community expanded into the larger network of the Baroody, Cortas, Nassif, and Shehadeh families all still closely associated with Ras Beirut up to today. A self-conscious group, they made Ras Beirut their home where they married, raised and educated their children, and built their futures, personifying Ras Beirut as a community of middle class educated professionals. What set the Ras Beirut Protestant community

apart was how they redefined themselves as Arab Protestants not as much a testimony of their religiosity as it was to their adopted cultural outlook and attitudes as “cultural Protestants.”<sup>104</sup> In this sense, this chapter grounds the history of this community in the theoretical work of Pierre Bourdieu and Michel de Certeau in the concerted presence of collective community *habitus* practiced in everyday life. As compared to the Anglo-American community who viewed Ras Beirut from the outside in (always conscious of their image abroad), the Protestants community viewed Ras Beirut from the inside out. As their epithet suggests, the Protestants of Ras Beirut affixed their identity to a collective rootedness with place.

Chapter Five, “Ras Beirut Narratives of Coexistence,” attends to the oldest community of Ras Beirut made up of its “original” Sunni Muslim and Greek Orthodox Christian community whose historic identity is still defined by Ras Beirut. This chapter draws its findings from the very few written popular histories of Ras Beirut and the few published memoirs (such as Munir Shama’a’s) but relies to the greatest extent on oral history as evidence. Central to the constructions of these local Ras Beirut Christian and Muslim identities is the belief in their constitution as one family, or *ahl Ras Beirut*. More often than not, their narratives are prefaced with the assertion of their unbroken legacy of harmonious coexistence based on milk kinship and communal interdependence in times of insecurity. As such, these “narratives of coexistence” articulate local expressions of exceptionalism. As far as can be determined, only two popular histories, Kamal Rebeiz’s book, *Those good ol’ days... Oh Ras Beirut*, and Mahmoud Hojeij’s short film, *Memories*

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<sup>104</sup> George Sabra, “Mustaqbal al-wujud al-’injiliyyi fi lubnan,” in *Fi Sabeel al-Hiwar al-Maskuni; Maqalaat Lahutiya Injiliyya*. (Beirut: Dar Manshurat al-Nafeer, 2001), 107; Kamal Salibi, “Arab Protestant Heritage,” *Theological Review* 13 2 (November, 1992).

of *Ras Beirut*, are dedicated solely to the subject of Ras Beirut.<sup>105</sup> Both sources are invaluable in the voices captured on paper and film, although their intention for popular audiences is laden with ubiquitous clichés. But the repetition and reproduction of these sometimes hackneyed, though often rueful, stories of coexistence are more significant as a commentary on the present rather than accurate portrayal of the past. They express a collective sense of yearning for a past that should have had a better future. Indeed, the stories reflect a sense of lost bearings and belonging. More attached to the past, many of Ras Beirut's eldest inhabitants feel marginalized in the post-war present. They live out of time and place and hold onto a past rapidly slipping away and "much more unpredictable than the future."<sup>106</sup> More than any other community, this community of Muslims and Christians of Ras Beirut use their narratives of coexistence to establish a sense of continuity with the idealized portrayal of pre-war Ras Beirut while simultaneously declaring it forever gone.

Ras Beirut's sense of history is deeply sustained by multiple and coterminous narratives of exceptionalism. Each of Ras Beirut's communities forged their own relationship to place defined in exceptionalist terms. The Anglo-Americans transposed their memory of a New England landscape on Ras Beirut as a place to live their self-contained lives. The Arab Protestants found their homes and their collective identity in Ras Beirut as a place to practice their routines of cultural Protestantism. The Orthodox Christian-Sunni Muslim community represents the continuity of the past with the present in Ras Beirut as a place to perpetuate the belief in their primordial coexistence as the

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<sup>105</sup> This is an idiomatic translation of the title which literally translated is *God bless those good ol' days...oh Ras Beirut*; Kamal Rebeiz, *Rizq allah ay-haydeek al-ayyam...ya Ras Bāyruṭ* (Beirut: al-Matbou'at al-Moussawarat, 1986). Hojeij, *Memories*.

<sup>106</sup> Svetlana Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia*, (New York: Basic Books, 2001), xiv.

crucible of its exceptionalism. The making of Ras Beirut as place and as the memory of a place crystallized in between Anglo-American missionary expectation for an imagined future and local Arab longing for a mythical past. The resultant diversity and interaction of peoples with each other and place from the late nineteenth century to the outbreak of the Lebanese Civil War defined the “power of place” that is Ras Beirut: a landscape of an idealized America for Beirutis and of Beirut for Americans.<sup>107</sup>

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<sup>107</sup> Dolores Hayden, *The Power of Place: Urban Landscapes as Public History* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1995).

## CHAPTER 2

### **“ANOTHER AMHERST ON THE SITE OF ANCIENT BERYTUS” EARLY IMPACTS OF NEW ENGLAND ON THE RAS BEIRUT LANDSCAPE, 1870-1920**

#### **Introduction**

Arguably the most tangible expression of Ras Beirut's landscape of memory is the Syrian Protestant College (SPC, later American University of Beirut [AUB]) as an architectural narrative of exceptionalism. From 1870 to 1920, the Anglo-American missionary educators recreated a monumental incarnation of a New England college landscape against the dramatic topography of Ras Beirut. Not an exact replica of any one New England college landscape, the SPC nonetheless represented their effort to realize a New England microcosm in the image of a *city on a hill*. The articulation of the college's significance in terms of unique providence, moreover, gave Ras Beirut a “double temporality” as “both a place of origin and the utopian prospect of the future.”<sup>108</sup> Ras Beirut became the locus of redefined missionary goals in the establishment of the college which in turn indelibly molded the urban fabric of Ras Beirut for the better part of the twentieth century.

This chapter draws from text, architecture, and topography to examine how the Anglo-American missionary college founders from New England visualized and realized Ras Beirut as the site of their college. The natural and the built landscape of the SPC is a convergence of the image of New England and the actuality of Ras Beirut. This chapter traces the evolution of the SPC's built landscape from 1870 to 1920 to show how missionary educators used buildings to legitimize their presence and to establish an

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<sup>108</sup> W.J.T. Mitchell, “Holy Landscapes: Israel, Palestine, and the American Wilderness,” *Critical Inquiry* 26 2 (Winter, 2000): 213.

historical-architectural lineage with New England. For the campus of the SPC is a composite of a New England college campus. In their attempt to transform vision, or sight into site, these missionary educators at first employed an architecture of overwhelmingly hard-edged monumentality and containment.<sup>109</sup> At the same time, their plans were contingent on Ras Beirut's response. While the line of massive college buildings on a scale out of proportion with their surroundings recalled a spatial memory specific to New England, Ras Beirut's natural geography dictated the outline of the SPC's physical and spatial growth. In the same way, the SPC's buildings featured the doorknobs and the double-pane sash windows of New England material culture, they were constructed of local materials. By the first decade of the twentieth century, SPC architecture gradually shifted from a language of domination to a responsiveness and inclusivity in dialogical relation to Ras Beirut. Ras Beirut topography complemented New England collegiate architecture and directed its face north towards the seascape and south towards the unfolding layout of its streetscape. The SPC's built landscape extended Beirut's urbanization, connecting the city of ancient intramural Berytus to the college on the hill at Ras Beirut.

Further, this chapter is clearly situated in the scholarly domain of transnational history in its attention to the "flow" of people, ideas, and culture between New England and Ras Beirut.<sup>110</sup> For the SPC was born of the interrelated history of the burgeoning college campus tradition and the nineteenth-century religious revivals taking place across the United States. While the SPC represented the continuity of the Anglo-American

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<sup>109</sup> Mitchell, "Holy," 198. Play on his phrase "turn[ed] site into sight."

<sup>110</sup> C.A. Bayly et al., "AHR Conversation: On Transnational History," *The American Historical Review*, 111 5 (December 2006): 1444.

college campus tradition well beyond the territorial boundaries of the United States, its purpose fulfilled local secular Arab demands subverting the original Anglo-American missionary injunction to preach, not teach.<sup>111</sup> In this sense, SPC's history and the concomitant history of Ras Beirut is a part of a larger story of the unintended consequences of a missionary-local, U.S. - Middle Eastern, encounter that resulted in cross-cultural exchange in the making of Ras Beirut.

Four years after the SPC's inauguration in 1866, its Anglo-American Protestant missionary founders gathered in Ras Beirut to celebrate the laying of the cornerstone of the first building of its new campus. With visions of establishing "another Amherst on the site of Ancient Berytus," they located their college on the outskirts of the city of Beirut, at Ras Beirut.<sup>112</sup> On that sparsely populated rural promontory overlooking the Mediterranean Sea, SPC's founders followed in the footsteps of their New England predecessors who had founded their colleges at a distance from the perceived dangers of the city. Early New England college founders, in turn, followed the tradition of their forebears. Indeed, both the Protestant missionary movement and the idea of the self-contained college first travelled to the United States across the Atlantic Ocean from England in the early 17<sup>th</sup> century. Alumni of Cambridge University, located outside London, organized the founding of Harvard College outside of Boston in 1636. Harvard graduates founded Yale College in Connecticut in 1701, Yale converts to Presbyterianism founded Princeton College in New Jersey in 1746; Yale and Princeton, in turn, "became

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<sup>111</sup> Field, 350-2.

<sup>112</sup> William Tyler to Daniel Bliss, Sept. 31, 1870 [sic], in Bliss Family Papers, Box 1, Folder 17, Archives and Special Collections, Amherst College. In Arabic 'rās' means head describing Ras Beirut's location at the westernmost tip of the peninsula, on the outskirts (in the 19<sup>th</sup> century) of the city center of Beirut.



‘mother’ colleges for their denominations founding colleges as settlements spread west” becoming, like missionaries, “errands into the wilderness.”<sup>113</sup>

In New England, to some “America’s first strongly imagined region with an early historical consciousness, a high rate of literacy, and cultural production,” higher education went hand in hand with missionary work propagating both the small self-contained college campus and the overseas missionary movement.<sup>114</sup> Two of New England’s earliest colleges, Harvard and Dartmouth Colleges, were founded to educate Native Americans to proselytize amongst their own.<sup>115</sup> The spread of colleges over the next half-century, however, did not see widespread conversion of Native Americans, foreshadowing the equally dismal conversion rates in nineteenth-century Ottoman Syria. Nonetheless, the Second Great Awakening of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries reignited Anglo-American missionary zeal.<sup>116</sup> Fresh graduates of New England’s colleges and seminaries spearheaded this wave to prepare the world for the Second Coming of Christ. Turning their attention to the East, these young believers set in motion the creation of the most powerful and far-reaching foreign missionary organization, the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM)

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<sup>113</sup> Blake Gumprecht, *The American College Town* (Amherst, Massachusetts: University of Massachusetts Press, 2008), 19. Hutchinson, *Errand*, 58.

<sup>114</sup> Joseph Conforti, *Imagining New England, Explorations of Regional Identity from the Pilgrims to the Mid-Twentieth Century* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001), 6. Thomas A. Gaines, *The Campus as a Work of Art* (Praeger: Westport, Connecticut and London, 1991), 76. “Because it was the earliest, New England’s regionalism is the most pronounced. A sense of antiquity and place characterizes these campuses.”

<sup>115</sup> Paul Venable Turner, *Campus; An American Planning Tradition* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1984), 18.

<sup>116</sup> Makdisi, *Artillery*.

founded in Boston in 1810.<sup>117</sup> Indeed, the ABCFM emerged directly out of the millennial enthusiasm of a handful of Williams College students in the hills of northwest Massachusetts. The ensuing impact of the Anglo-American foreign missionary movement in its association with the New England college tradition, resulted in the founding of American colleges worldwide in Iran, India, Japan, and Hawaii, and the Ottoman Empire; from this standpoint, the SPC was one of its most successful and fruitful endeavors.

The Anglo-American missionary founders of the SPC were also both New England college graduates and former members of the ABCFM. Their Puritan association of the city with contamination and decay mandated their preference for a landscape they identified with purity, wilderness, and prospect to shape their city on a hill.<sup>118</sup> The distinct character of Ras Beirut's topography and its distance from the city center gave them the space to build their New England microcosm. That the SPC's first two presidents, Daniel and Howard Bliss, father and son, were both Amherst College graduates determined the feel of the built landscape of the Ras Beirut campus.<sup>119</sup>

### **From New England to Ras Beirut**

Fifty years before SPC's founding at Ras Beirut the first American missionaries landed in the Ottoman Empire to join the already vigorous European missionary efforts in the Holy Land.<sup>120</sup> Aware that Islam was the state religion and that any attempt to convert

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<sup>117</sup> Field, *America*; Hutchinson, *Errand*; Finnie, *Pioneers*.

<sup>118</sup> Gumprecht, 20.

<sup>119</sup> Daniel Bliss (1<sup>st</sup> SPC president 1866-1902), Howard Bliss (2<sup>nd</sup> SPC president 1902-1920).

<sup>120</sup> See Lester Vogel, *To See a Promised Land: Americans and the Holy Land in the Nineteenth Century*, (Pennsylvania State University Press, 1993). The historiography of American

Muslims was illegal, they adopted a nonconfrontational approach in their conversion methods. They directed their attention first to those “‘who were Christian in name’ who, when thoroughly reformed, would endeavour to evangelize not only the Muslims but also the Jews and the Pagans.”<sup>121</sup> At Jerusalem, however, they met Ottoman restrictions and the hostility of the Greek Orthodox Patriarchy.<sup>122</sup> As a temporary measure, the small group of missionaries relocated to Beirut where they set up their regional headquarters and in 1824 opened their first school. By the mid-1840s Beirut had become the permanent headquarters of the Syria Mission with the establishment of a local Protestant church and twelve schools for roughly 450 students in and around Beirut.<sup>123</sup> Nonetheless, after years of investment in language acquisition, school establishment, and the imperial Ottoman decree conferring Protestantism millet status, the anticipated mass conversion never transpired.<sup>124</sup> In response, missionaries reframed their attention from direct to indirect proselytization in response to local demands for education. Not without difficulty they convinced their U.S. based Board to stay in Beirut.

Beirut made an ideal missionary base. Not only did it make practical sense, for its proximity to Jerusalem, its seaport accessibility, its “Frank” residents, and British consular protection, but it also gave the missionaries a dramatic backdrop of mountains

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missionary movement and the impact in particular of its activities in the former territories of the Ottoman Empire, especially Lebanon, Syria, and Egypt has been accorded significant scholarly attention in the works of Tibawi, Makdisi, and Sharkey.

<sup>121</sup> A.L. Tibawi, “The American Missionaries in Beirut and Butrus al-Bustani,” *Middle Eastern Affairs* 3, ed. Albert Hourani (Carbondale, Illinois: Southern Illinois Press, 1963), 139.

<sup>122</sup> Habib Badr, “American Protestant Missionary Beginnings,” *New Faith in Ancient Lands*, ed. Heleen Murre-van den Berg (Leiden: University of Leiden, 2005), 213.

<sup>123</sup> Tibawi, “Genesis,” Part I, 5-8.

<sup>124</sup> For more on the failed conversions see Makdisi, *Artillery*.

and sea on which to stage their heroic endeavors.<sup>125</sup> Even before the late nineteenth-century “Holy Land mania” Beirut’s Anglo-American missionaries described Beirut’s natural surroundings in terms that would appeal to the collective imaginary of their home-based audiences.<sup>126</sup> From their very first accounts, they drew upon features of Beirut’s physical landscape to legitimize their continued presence. Pliny Fisk, one of the first two ABCFM missionaries to enter Jerusalem in 1819, advised that:

Beyroot seems to me to possess many important advantages as a missionary station. It is situated at the foot of Mount Lebanon, and a missionary might very profitably spend the hot months of the summer among the convents and villages of the mountain. Another circumstance is that here he will find, opportunities to receive and forward communications. Here too he will enjoy the protection of an English consul, and the society and friendship of several other consuls and their families. I think a missionary family would be more comfortable situated at Beyroot, than at any other place which I have seen in Syria. It is the great emporium of all that dwell upon the mountains.<sup>127</sup>

Sarah Lanman Smith, teacher, missionary wife, and founder of one of the first schools in Beirut wrote endearingly of Beirut:

I can hardly convey to you the feelings which pervaded my breast, as I looked upon it. The bird’s eye view of Beyroot, at the foot of that famed Lebanon, which is truly a ‘goodly mountain,’ riveted every affection of my heart, while its beauties commanded my attention. Beyroot pleases me more than any spot which I ever saw, my own dear native town not excepted.<sup>128</sup>

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<sup>125</sup> Tibawi, “Genesis,” Part I, 4.

<sup>126</sup> Hilton Obenzinger, *American Palestine: Melville, Twain, and the Holy Land Mania* (Princeton University Press, 1999).

<sup>127</sup> Alvan Bond, *Memoir of the Rev. Pliny Fisk, A.M.: Late Missionary to Palestine* (Boston: Crocker and Brewster, 1828), 317-18.

<sup>128</sup> Edward Hooker, *Memoir of Mrs. Sarah Lanman Smith, Late of the Mission in Syria, Under the Direction of the ABCFM* (Boston: Perkins & Marvin, 1839), 180.

William McClure Thomson, author of *The Land and the Book* (1859), most resolutely made the case for Beirut as the site of long-term American missionary settlement and investment. He wrote,

The city and suburbs, as you perceive, are situated on the northern slopes of a triangular plain, whose *base line* is the shore, from Ras Beirut to Nahr Yabis. The *perpendicular* runs eastward from the Ras about five miles to the foot of Lebanon, at the bottom of St. George's Bay. The *hypothénuse* (sic) is the irregular line of the mountains. The whole plain is a projection *seaward* from the general direction of the coast, and along the base of the hills it is so low as to appear like an island to one sailing up from Sidon. The surface rises gradually from the south to the immediate vicinity of the city, where it is about three hundred feet above the sea. Thence it falls rapidly down toward the roadstead on the north by abrupt, irregular, and winding terraces.<sup>129</sup>

Thomson's prospect (Figure 3) was more than a hillside site to behold; his multi-dimensional depiction poised Beirut as the exceptional site for the most ambitious missionary endeavor yet.<sup>130</sup> Moreover, in his capacity as Acting Pastor of the Anglo-American Congregation of Beirut from 1860-1863, Thomson made two decisive propositions to the ABCFM: first, that a college of higher education be established in Beirut and second, that Daniel Bliss, Amherst College graduate and member of ABCFM's Syria Mission, be its president.<sup>131</sup> Bliss who first came to Beirut in 1856, submitted his resignation to the ABCFM and travelled to the United States in 1862 to begin fund-raising for the college. At a missionary meeting in Springfield, Massachusetts

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<sup>129</sup> Thomson, 40. Italicized in the original.

<sup>130</sup> Robert M. Copeland, "A Sesquicentennial History of the Community Church of Beirut, 1823-1973," (Beirut: Community Church of Beirut, 1974): iv. Archives of the Near East School of Theology (NEST), Beirut, Lebanon.

<sup>131</sup> "Extract from a letter written by Dr. William Thomson," ASC, Amherst College (underline in the original).

he met William E. Dodge, known as *A Merchant Prince of the Nineteenth Century* and co-founder of the Phelps, Dodge & Company.<sup>132</sup> The relationship between the Blisses and the Dodges evolved into a multi-generational source of funding sustained by mutual interests, friendship, and later intermarriage. The State of New York issued the charter for the SPC and in December 1866 it opened its doors to a class of sixteen students.<sup>133</sup> From 1866 to 1873, however, the SPC's life in Beirut was peripatetic; the small faculty and student body moved from one rented house to another in "an unsettled state and the College was looked upon by the natives as an experiment which might succeed or not."<sup>134</sup>

### **Ras Beirut's New England Topography**

David Stuart Dodge, William Dodge's son, a Yale College graduate and the college's first professor of English, joined President Bliss to scour Beirut for a permanent site for their "college on wheels."<sup>135</sup> On June 24, 1868, the annual report to the SPC's Board of Managers recorded that the first portions of land at Ras Beirut had been purchased and "money is now on hand sufficient to complete the purchase of the entire plot" of fifteen to twenty acres "lying between the Greek Church and the sea."<sup>136</sup> In Bliss'

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<sup>132</sup> Richard Lowitt, *A Merchant Prince of the Nineteenth Century* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1954). Brian VanDeMark, *American Sheikhs, Two Families, Four Generations, and the Story of America's Influence in the Middle East* (Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books, 2012), 43.

<sup>133</sup> Tibawi, "Genesis," Part II, 199.

<sup>134</sup> Annual Report 1877, 34. Buildings and Grounds Collection, College Hall History Box AA: 2.5.3.3.2.3, ASC, Jafet Library, AUB.

<sup>135</sup> Daniel Bliss, *The Reminiscences of Daniel Bliss*, ed. Frederick J. Bliss (New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1920), 188.

<sup>136</sup> Letter to Board of Managers, June 24, 1868, *Annual Reports of Managers of the Syrian Protestant College 1866-67-1901-02*. ASC, Jafet Library, AUB. *Waqf*, status meant tax exemption under religious or educational endowment.

*Reminiscences* he mentions Mikhael Younes Al-Gharzouzi, “one of the shrewdest natives, a broker” who advised Bliss to show no interest in the land, but to make himself visible to the landowner by regularly strolling past his shop, until the property was purchased.<sup>137</sup> Although Bliss does not elaborate on Gharzouzi’s role, he evidently acted as much more than a broker for the missionaries. Bliss gave Gharzouzi the funds to register the purchased property in his name at the Beirut legal registry (*Sijilat al-mahkamat al-shari’a*) because Ottoman law prohibited U.S. citizens from owning land in Ottoman territories.<sup>138</sup> Gharzouzi registered it as a *waqf*, or a religious endowment, on which a school headed by Mr. Bliss may be built. In 1875 when the Ottoman government extended the right to own property to U.S. citizens, Gharzouzi readily signed the deeds over to the college.<sup>139</sup>

Bliss never mentions the name of the original property owner, except to note that he was a local shopkeeper. Indeed, the names of the owners of the plots of land that subsequently comprised the college grounds are still subject to some present-day contest; several individuals claim that their families sold land to the college either for a pittance or, in some cases, given for free.<sup>140</sup> Be that as it may, the first tract of land purchased for

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<sup>137</sup> Bliss, *Reminiscences*, 191.

<sup>138</sup> Abdel Latif Fakhouri, “Mikhael al-Gharzouzi a‘yar ismu li-itlaq al-jami‘a al-amirkiya (Mikhael Al-Gharzouzi gave his name to start the American University),” *An-Nahar*, June 23, 2005. Gharzouzi was probably a member of the Greek Orthodox Ras Beirut Gharzouzi family and his daughter married Ilias Rebeiz.

<sup>139</sup> Fakhouri. Not only a broker, then, Gharzouzi had to have some political and social weight to establish a *waqf* and although Bliss makes no mention of these details of Gharzouzi’s indispensable role, he enjoyed a long trust-worthy relationship with the college.

<sup>140</sup> The most often-made claim is that the College bought the land from the Talhouks, a notable Druze family who were allegedly the largest landowners in Ras Beirut, though they lived in the Shuf. Members of the Da-‘uq family, also claim to have given the land to the college – Leila Da-

the college was the “largest and cheapest” at sixty thousand U.S. dollars.<sup>141</sup> In almost the same breath that Bliss described the site chosen to build the SPC as “the finest site in all Beirut if not in all Syria” he added that they “paid for the property far more than its market value; it scarcely had a market value. It was a home for jackals and a dumping place for the offal of the city.”<sup>142</sup> Defined on its northern and western flanks by hard rocky ridges overlooking the Mediterranean Sea, from the south by sand dunes swept up by the prevailing southerly winds, and from the east in the shadow of the Lebanon Mountain, the peninsula of Ras Beirut presented these self-defined American pioneers a compelling backdrop for their landscape of destiny.<sup>143</sup> Here they identified features of the sublime geography of American exceptionalism in the spirit of the contemporaneous “discoveries” made in the westward expansion across the North American continent. Ras Beirut’s exposure and sparse habitation presented an ideal wilderness in need of taming and a destiny made manifest by its inaccessibility and inhospitality.

Moreover, Ras Beirut put the college in full view of ships coming in and out of the port. The college scanned the harbor, city, and mountain to its east. Its perch gave it the same physical association with New England college landscapes that recalled the Puritan image of John Winthrop’s *city upon a hill* as a model community of self-righteous enlightenment. New England’s early colleges were built on prominent sites

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uq Idriss interview. And the Bekh‘azi families also claim the land was theirs, which perhaps makes the most sense since they did live and own shops along present-day Bliss Street running parallel to the college. Interviews with Michel Bekh‘azi, September 15, 2012 and Bahij Bekh‘azi, September 27, 2012.

<sup>141</sup> Bliss, *Reminiscences*, 192. Fifth Annual Report of the Board of Managers, SPC, June 27<sup>th</sup>, 1871, 22. ASC, Jafet Library, AUB.

<sup>142</sup> Bliss, *Reminiscences*, 190-191.

<sup>143</sup> Jessup, *Fifty-Three Years*, 31.



above and apart from the physically mundane. Amherst College, for example, cast itself as the “college on a hill.”<sup>144</sup> Viewing itself as a place of enlightened dissemination, in local and global terms, its college seal reads *Terras irradiant*, “Let them enlighten the land.” Bliss wrote of his memory of that ideal world to his former Amherst professor, William S. Tyler:

My first impressions of Amherst College have never left me [...] I arrived from Ohio by the way of Lake Erie and the Canal, and had seen not a little of rough and profane society on our journey. What we witnessed on entering the College, was such a contrast to all this, and indeed to all that we had been accustomed to in our own previous observation and experience, that it seemed as if we had passed into another world!<sup>145</sup>

Bliss read Tyler’s *History of Amherst College* as he oversaw the construction of the SPC’s first buildings.<sup>146</sup> The combined force of his Amherst past and his “imagined future” undoubtedly influenced the decisions he made.<sup>147</sup> Bliss chose the dramatic setting of Ras Beirut, not Ancient Berytus as Tyler assumed, because its landscape promised exceptional providence. As such Ras Beirut’s situation was quintessentially endowed with the physical and sensory qualities necessary to ensure that the SPC as a

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<sup>144</sup> *The College on the Hill, Celebrating the 175<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Amherst College, 1821-1996*, (Amherst College, 1996). Contemporaneous with Amherst College, Tufts College and Geneva College in New York also defined themselves as “college on the hill.” Turner, 106.

<sup>145</sup> William Tyler, D.D., *A History of Amherst College* (New York: Frederick H. Hitchcock, 1873, 1895), 354.

<sup>146</sup> Daniel Bliss, *Letters from a New Campus; written to his wife Abby and their four children during their visit to Amherst, Massachusetts, 1873-1874*, Douglas and Belle Dorman Rugh and Alfred H. Howell, eds. (Beirut: American University of Beirut Press, 1994), 151. David Lowenthal writes extensively on “the relation between the world outside and the pictures in our heads” borrowing his conceptualization from Walter Lippmann’s writings in reference the behavior of public opinion. See Kenneth Olwig, “The Lowenthal Legacy,” *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, Vol. 93, No. 4 (Dec., 2003).

<sup>147</sup> Amy DeRogatis, *Moral Geography: Maps, Missionaries, and the American Frontier* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003), 59.

city on a hill would attract attention and admiration. Indeed, the power of Ras Beirut's dramatic landscape created the SPC as much as the SPC would mold the future social and cultural landscape of Ras Beirut.

## **SPC Architecture**

### **An Architecture of Monumentality**

While Ras Beirut evoked a New England frame of mind, SPC's architecture evinced a New England frame of reference. In 1871 Bliss visited the eight-year-old Robert College and its first president, fellow New Englander Cyrus Hamlin, who had just completed its first building, Hamlin Hall. Bliss sought Hamlin's advice on "how to build and how not to build."<sup>148</sup> Evidently Hamlin managed the entire construction site, from the mechanics of the water pump to "teaching his masons how to lay stone" and erected the building in two years "without the aid or interference of any architect or builder."<sup>149</sup> Hamlin Hall stood next to Rumelihisari, Ottoman Sultan Mehmet the Conqueror's fortress, and was built of the same blue limestone quarried on the site itself.<sup>150</sup> Though Hamlin Hall was built around an interior courtyard in the manner of a Turkish caravansary (or inn), an upper story of mansard windows wrapped around its massive exterior recalled an architectural style overwhelmingly Victorian. Except for the massive

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<sup>148</sup> Bliss, *Reminiscences*, 197. Robert College was also founded out of ABCFM endeavors, shared the same members as the SPC on its Board of Trustees, and was jointly chartered by the State of New York with the SPC in 1864 (B. Dodge, 11).

<sup>149</sup> George Washburn, *Fifty Years in Constantinople and Recollection of Robert College* (Boston, New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1911), 27-28. Keith M. Greenwood, *Robert College: The American Founders* (Istanbul: Bogazici University Press, 2003), 107.

<sup>150</sup> Cyrus Hamlin, *My Life and Times* (Boston, Chicago: Congregational Sunday School and Publishing Society, 1897), 452.

bulk of the building, Bliss did not follow Hamlin's architectural example. He did, however, return to Beirut with Hamlin's energy, confidence and a sense of urgency to erect "proper edifices."<sup>151</sup>

In rapid succession and with Dodge's financial backing, four SPC buildings were completed by 1873: a main building, with forty-four rooms and a chapel, a medical hall, an observatory, a dining hall with twenty-eight rooms. Bliss wrote that now they were situated on a "breezy promontory overlooking sea and surrounded with twenty-five acres of College property in pleasing contrast with the dingy rooms first occupied surrounded as they were by a wall not twenty feet from the door and filled at times with pestilential air from the neighborhoods."<sup>152</sup> Though modest relative to its New England counterparts, SPC's acreage exceeded that of the ancient intramural city of Beirut.<sup>153</sup> Much larger than Robert College's twelve acres and already boasting more buildings, the SPC's location at Ras Beirut gave it the distance, the height, and the expanse to set it apart from the city.<sup>154</sup>

Like their New England prototypes, the SPC buildings had a colossal size and monumentality that symbolized the authority and value attached to education.<sup>155</sup> The first SPC building to establish the line of red-roofed, sandstone structures along the upper

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<sup>151</sup> Bliss, *Reminiscences*, 12.

<sup>152</sup> *Annual Report 1877*, 34. ASC, Jafet Library, AUB, Beirut.

<sup>153</sup> Kassir, *Beirut*, 156.

<sup>154</sup> Washburn, 8.

<sup>155</sup> Turner, 17. All of SPC's "founding fathers" were products of New England colleges; of the seven, three were graduates of Amherst College (Daniel Bliss, Edwin Lewis, Harvey Porter), one of Yale College (D.S. Dodge), two the University of the City of New York (George E. Post, John Wortabet) and one of Jefferson Medical College in Philadelphia (Dr. C.E. Van Dyck).

ridge of Ras Beirut was College Hall. On December 7<sup>th</sup>, 1871, William E. Dodge referred to “this beautiful situation” on which to build the campus in his cornerstone laying speech. He described the first building as one of “commanding proportions, in accordance with plans designed by an eminent American architect; and like a city set on a hill, or as the lighthouse at the entrance of your harbor, will be one of the first objects which will meet the eye of the stranger entering your port.”<sup>156</sup> Opposite sides of the same New England coin, city on a hill and lighthouse, these triumphant metaphors were made immediately relevant to the landscape of Ras Beirut. On this same occasion, Bliss famously announced, “this College is for all conditions and classes of men without regard to colour, nationality, race or religion. A man white, black or yellow; Christian, Jew, Mohammedan or heathen, may enter and enjoy all of the advantages of this institution for three, four or eight years, and go out believing in one God, in many Gods, or in no God.”<sup>157</sup> While these words bespoke openness and tolerance, they were not reflected in building they commemorated. For the main building, College Hall, was an overwhelmingly massive structure meant to command its surroundings, inspiring not acceptance but awe (Figure 4).

In his *Reminiscences* Daniel Bliss referred to architectural plans drawn in New York so “complete in details, so that we, though unacquainted with building, were able to

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<sup>156</sup> “One Hundred Years Ago: Like the Lighthouse of Your Harbor,” *Al-Kulliyah* 37 2 (Spring 1961). Full speech with reference to “eminent American architect” (not included in *Al-Kulliyah*) also printed in Robert Morris, *Freemasonry in the Holy Land* (New York: Masonic Publishing Company, 1872), 236.

<sup>157</sup> Bayard Dodge, *The American University of Beirut; A Brief History of the University and the Lands Which It Serves* (Beirut: Khayat’s, 1958), 9. Stephen Penrose, *That They May Have Light; The American University of Beirut* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1941), Appendix N, 333. Predominantly Christian in its first few decades, by 1940 the SPC’s student population grew to 1,992, of which 37% were Muslim and 10% Jewish.

follow them. Commencing with the simple ground-plan we learned to work out the more intricate parts.”<sup>158</sup> Though he never named the architect, the original SPC blueprints of College Hall bear the signature of “GEO. B. POST Architect 120 Broadway New York”.<sup>159</sup> George B. Post was the first cousin of George E. Post, former missionary to Tripoli, Lebanon, and the SPC’s first professor of surgery and botany. A famous New York City architect, George B. Post never visited Ras Beirut, but at least two buildings of the SPC campus are his design: College Hall and, twenty years later, the Chapel or Assembly Hall (1891).<sup>160</sup>

In 1870 Post just completed the Equitable Life Assurance Building, known as the first “Elevator Building” which set the skyscraper trend in New York.<sup>161</sup> More renowned for his commercial architecture, Post designed only a few college buildings; among them, the Bonner-Marquand Gymnasium (1868-1870), Reunion Hall (1869-1871), and Dickinson Hall (1869-1870) on the campus of Princeton University. All three buildings represented an awkward stage in Princeton’s architecture and all burned down or were razed for being structurally unsound.<sup>162</sup> Post’s College Hall at SPC long outlasted his Princeton buildings but it too represented an experiment of sorts.<sup>163</sup>

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<sup>158</sup> Bliss, *Reminiscences*, 199.

<sup>159</sup> Blueprints of College Hall, n.d., Facilities Planning and Design Unit, AUB.

<sup>160</sup> Winston Weisman, “The Commercial Architecture of George B. Post,” *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 31 3 (October 1972), 201-203.

<sup>161</sup> *Ibid*, 178-179.

<sup>162</sup> “A ‘Bricks-and-Mortar’ President: The McCosh Presidency, 1868-88,” *Princeton Campus; An Interactive Computer History, 1746-1996*. <http://etcweb.princeton.edu:80/Campus/chap4.html>

<sup>163</sup> “The College of the City of New York; George B. Post architect,” *The Architectural Record*, (Dec. 1905) 305-312. By the end of his career G.B. Post and Sons was one of the “largest and busiest (firms) in the country.” Post was also part of the eight-person architectural team chosen

The height of Post's New York skyscrapers found expression in the scale of SPC's College Hall. Indeed, College Hall was one of the tallest structures in all of Ottoman Beirut coming close in size to the Ottoman infantry barracks, later the Grand Serail which was "easily the largest building in Ottoman Beirut."<sup>164</sup> In its size and function, College Hall followed a trend established by New England's oldest colleges. Harvard's first building was the largest structure in seventeenth century New England and Princeton's Nassau Hall, the earliest "all in one" college prototype, "imitated more often than any other college edifice" was the largest in the eighteenth century English colonies.<sup>165</sup> Upon completion in 1873, College Hall dominated Ras Beirut, overshadowing all other buildings, even the lighthouse, in proportion and scale.<sup>166</sup> It set the east-west line of the campus in relation to Ras Beirut and centered what would become the upper campus college row.

Princeton's Nassau Hall, fronted by a green space, marked another of feature repeated across New England campuses (Figure 5). In fact, the word campus, now inseparably associated with college grounds, was first used in reference to this area in

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for the Columbian Exposition of 1893 (including Louis Sullivan, Richard Hunt, and Charles McKim who were giants in late nineteenth century American architecture) and designed prominent buildings such as the *New York Times* Building and the Prudential Life Insurance Company Building (1910) in New York City.

<sup>164</sup> Jens Hanssen in "Your Beirut Is on My Desk, Ottomanizing Beirut under Sultan Abdulhamid II (1876-1909)" in *Projecting Beirut: Episodes in the Construction and Reconstruction of a Modern City*, eds. Peter Rowe and Hashim Sarkis (Munich, London, New York: Prestel, 1998), 49. Beirut's imperial barracks on the Qantari hill, began in 1853 and finished in the late 1870s according. Hanssen, *Fin de Siecle Beirut*, 241. In 1898 the accompanying freestanding twenty-five meter clock tower became celebrated as the tallest structure in Beirut. Kassir, *Beirut*, 134.

<sup>165</sup> Turner, 47.

<sup>166</sup> Hanssen, "Your Beirut," 48. In 1889 the Ras Beirut lighthouse (Manara) would be replaced by "a taller lighthouse because the newly built houses had obstructed the view from the port to the lighthouse."

front of Nassau Hall.<sup>167</sup> The open green on College Hall's north front set it back from the ridge, giving it a north-south axis to complement its predominant east-west one. Even more importantly, the green gave the building the coveted vista "to survey its domain and the country beyond" over the expanse of the Mediterranean Sea (Figure 6).<sup>168</sup>

College Hall's north façade that overlooked the sea, however, featured a decidedly non-New England double arcade of pointed arches. Though George B. Post's blue prints of the South, East, and West façade correspond in general to the proportions of the built structure, no blue prints of the North façade of College Hall survive to verify if his design included two rows of arcades. Some suggest that this design element evinces the initiative of local designers such as a man from Damascus known only as 'Abd al-Massih who was a mason and the site foreman.<sup>169</sup> 'Abd al-Massih surely played an instrumental role in determining best building practices as Bliss described him as an honest, dependable, and able leader of the work crew.<sup>170</sup> However, no evidence credits him with the design of any architectural features of College Hall. While it is certainly plausible that Abd al-Massih played a much more significant role than Bliss attributes to him, as seen in Gharzuzi's case with the first purchases of college property, the historical record still stands to be corrected. Be that as it may, the double row of open arcades on the building's north side, a decidedly non-New England characteristic, was visible only

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<sup>167</sup> Turner, 49.

<sup>168</sup> Ibid, 50.

<sup>169</sup> Majstorac-Kobiljski, "Learning," 103.

<sup>170</sup> Bliss, *Letters*, 110-111.

from the seaside of the building; the four stories of massive bulwark of the south side towered above Ras Beirut.

Known as *binayet as-sa'a* (Building of the Clock) to the locals, College Hall's clock tower drew the most notice. It tolled eleven times a day, first at 6:15 a.m. and last at 5:30 p.m., to regulate the hours of the SPC students' day.<sup>171</sup> Moreover, its bell marked the time outside the walls of the college. When it was inaugurated in 1874, it was the only clock tower in Ras Beirut and the second in all of Beirut. The first clock tower, built so local inhabitants would have "a better appreciation of the value and punctuality and uniformity in time," belonged to the Anglo-American Church located closer to Beirut's downtown.<sup>172</sup> In the next few years, clock towers were built at St. Joseph College, the Grand Serail, the railroad station, and the French Hospital. Indeed, Beirut's clock towers predated their proliferation throughout the provincial cities of the Ottoman Empire by a quarter of a century. For in 1901, Ottoman Sultan Abdulhamid II decreed the building of clock towers in every town and city in commemoration of his silver jubilee.<sup>173</sup> College Hall's clock tower, however, still boasted a distinct geographic, and hence authoritative, advantage over all the others owing to its location on the promontory of Ras Beirut. From there it could be read by telescope from the mountains.<sup>174</sup>

Another predominant feature of American collegiate design that resonated on SPC's campus was the placement of buildings in line with each other in a "college

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<sup>171</sup> Majstorac-Kobiljski, 109.

<sup>172</sup> Copeland, 13.

<sup>173</sup> Mehmet Bengü Uluengin, "Secularizing Anatolia Tick by Tick," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 42 1 (February 2010), 20.

<sup>174</sup> "College Hall: Oldest Building on AUB Campus," *AUB Bulletin* 12 17 (April 19, 1969), 3-4.



row.”<sup>175</sup> The college row first appeared at Yale College, becoming popularized in slight variations, for example, at Trinity College, Hartford; Western Reserve College, Cleveland; Wesleyan College, Middletown, Connecticut; and Amherst College.<sup>176</sup> The college row at Amherst comprised its first three buildings: Johnson Chapel at the center and the North College and South College on either side (Figure 7).<sup>177</sup> The clock tower of Johnson Chapel, rising above the tree line, was the first feature to meet the eye on the approach to Amherst.<sup>178</sup> With the completion of the Medical Hall, to its east, and the Ada Dodge Memorial Hall, for offices and dining facilities, to its west, the College Hall centered the SPC’s emerging east-west college row (Figure 8). In 1910, *The Springfield Republican* wrote of “the panorama from the Mediterranean, with its large cliff dotted with tufts of gnarled foliage and crowned with long irregular rows of substantial and artistic buildings presents an outward view of the SPC which does not suffer in comparison with most American colleges.”<sup>179</sup> Even though the rocky topography resisted leveling, the “undisciplined stretching of the buildings along the ridge” of SPC’s college row bespoke the basic features of a New England college landscape discernable to any familiar eye.<sup>180</sup> That the SPC’s buildings persevered over the unruly ground of Ras Beirut reinforced the steadfastness of this missionary endeavor in material terms.

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<sup>175</sup> Karen Van Lange and Lisa A. Reilly, *Vassar College; An Architectural Tour* (Princeton: Princeton Architectural Press, 2004), 5.

<sup>176</sup> Turner, 48.

<sup>177</sup> “College Hall: Oldest,” 3.

<sup>178</sup> Claude Moore Fuess, *Amherst: Story of a New England College*, (Boston, 1935), 86.

<sup>179</sup> “American Ways in Beirut Syrian Protestant College,” *The Springfield Republican* 43 (July 17, 1910): 13.

The Ada Dodge Memorial Hall spilled directly onto Midhat Pasha Street, the first east-west artery of Ras Beirut, today known as Bliss Street. Completed in 1873, David S. Dodge funded its expansion in 1884, naming it in memory of his only daughter who accompanied him to Beirut several times and died at the age of 21.<sup>181</sup> More modest in scale than College Hall to its east, Ada Dodge Hall was the first building to greet visitors on the upper ridge of the Ras Beirut promontory at the entrance of the campus. From a street-level view, Ada Dodge Hall poked out along the main street and up the junction of what later would be called Jeanne d'Arc Street (Figure 9). A multi-purpose building, it comprised four wings of two floors with twenty-four rooms to accommodate offices, student rooms, a refectory, and the college's growing Preparatory School.<sup>182</sup> Along with its multiple red-tiled roofs, its high, unadorned walls that zigzagged along the wall of the street, its most prominent feature was a freestanding square tower, a pseudo campanile, rising well above the roofline until its unexplained destruction in the 1960s.<sup>183</sup>

Morgan Hall's tower at Amherst College links it to Dodge Hall. Morgan Hall overlooks Amherst's main north-south axis, South Pleasant Street, in the same way that Ada Dodge Hall parallels the east-west axis of Midhat Pasha, today's Bliss Street (Figure 10).<sup>184</sup> Both towers evoke a similar sense of cubic rootedness, whether in relation to the

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<sup>180</sup> Assem Salaam, "Campus Architecture – The American University of Beirut," *Al-Kulliyah* (February 1962), 35.

<sup>181</sup> "Dodge Hall is Now Under Construction, Will Soon House the Economic Institute," 39 *Al-Kulliyah* (Winter 1963).

<sup>182</sup> In the early 1900s the built campus line extended further westwards to include Sage, Thomson, and Rockefeller Halls of today's IC campus.

<sup>183</sup> Ada Dodge's tower no longer exists today presumably torn down in the 1960s renovation work though an explanation has yet to be found.

thick trees of Amherst or the moving shapes of carriages and tramways along Ras Beirut's street. The tower of Ada Dodge Hall guarded the college entrance, directed the traffic, and set the orientation of the oncoming pedestrian, horse-drawn, and later motorized traffic, giving the street an undeniably distinct sense of place. It articulated a visual focal point marking the slight elbow in Ras Beirut's main street rendering the tower a familiar landmark to all who passed it. Both towers, Morgan and Dodge, complemented the verticality of Johnson and College Hall's towers, contributing to the extension of their respective townscapes in two and three dimensions (Figure 11).

### **An Architecture of Containment**

The architectural kinship between the SPC and Amherst College is perhaps most evident in the similarity of SPC's chapel, known as Assembly Hall, with Amherst College's Stearns Church. In a letter dated September 31<sup>st</sup>, 1870, Professor William Tyler of Amherst College wrote to Bliss, his former pupil and friend, of the cornerstone-laying ceremony of Stearns Church at Amherst College. He enclosed a photograph of the plan of the church in his letter for Bliss to use as a model for his campus "another Amherst on the site of Ancient Berytus."<sup>185</sup> While the SPC chapel was not built until 1892, the correspondence in design suggests that Bliss kept Tyler's advice in mind. A wealthy benefactor, E.B. Monroe, provided the funds for the building material and the same College Hall architect, George B. Post, prepared the plans without charge. Whether Post consulted Professor Tyler's photograph is unknown, but the symmetry between Assembly Hall and Stearns Church is unmistakable.

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<sup>184</sup> Stanley King, *The Consecrated Eminence: The Story of the Campus and Buildings of Amherst College* (Amherst, 1951): 45-46.

<sup>185</sup> Tyler to Bliss, Sept. 31, 1870.

Like Stearns Church, Assembly Hall featured a Gothic exterior, cruciform plan, and elaborate rose windows on three of its four arms. Much less lavish than the rich stonework, ornate detailing, and slate roof of Stearns Church, Assembly Hall was of unadorned, beige sandstone and red tile roofing, but minus a steeple (Figure 12; Figure 13). The interior of Assembly Hall conveys the same otherworldly sense of space as does Stearns Church; in both the plain interior walls exposed the ribs of the groin arches creating a vast open space of diffused colored light from the stained glass windows. Prominently placed at the upper entrance of the SPC grounds, along the increasingly clustered college row, Assembly Hall accrued an iconic significance in the minds of its students and served as “tangible evidence of university history” (Figure 14, Figure 15).<sup>186</sup>

New England college campuses also included observatories to illustrate the complementary nature of religion and science, permitting the contemplation of “that fathomless fountain and author of being.”<sup>187</sup> Williams College set the trend with the first college observatory in 1837 and Amherst College’s octagonal “Cabinet”, built in 1848, housed its observatory at the southeast corner of its college row to make an immediate impression on passers-by.<sup>188</sup> When the SPC’s Lee Observatory was completed in 1873 Bliss wrote of his hopes that it would “prove useful in the direct education of students and in attracting the attention of natives to the superiority of Western knowledge, thus helping to dispel ancient deep-rooted superstitions.”<sup>189</sup> For all practical purposes, the

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<sup>186</sup> Nabeel G. Ashkar, “Back to Assembly Hall,” *AUB Bulletin*, vol. 34, no. 3 (May 1992), n.p.

<sup>187</sup> Dedication speech, Williams College observatory, Turner, 106.

<sup>188</sup> Turner, 106.

<sup>189</sup> Elshakry, “The Gospel,” 196.

Observatory kept the clock tower's time based on its recorded meteorological observations and star positions. SPC professors Cornelius Van Dyck and Faris Nimr "started systematic records of meteorological data [...] and sent daily telegraphic reports to the Imperial Observatories in Constantinople and Vienna."<sup>190</sup> Besides setting college time, this data served the needs of ship captains who came to the Observatory to adjust their chronometers. After the First World War, with Lebanon under French mandate control, the Observatory became the reference point for accuracy and authority. According to its director, Professor Mansur Jurdak, the "observatory had won the confidence of the local community and even Dar al-Fatwa (Muslim House of Rulings) depended on the telescope to record the birth of the moon to announce the start of the holy month of Ramadan."<sup>191</sup>

Post Hall, the most unusual of SPC's buildings, stands to the east of College and Assembly Halls, filling in college row to the Medical Building. Completed in 1902, its design, down to the last detail, is the work of George E. Post, SPC professor of surgery, not his architect cousin.<sup>192</sup> "That most versatile of missionaries," Dr. Post was an ordained minister, a surgeon, a dentist, a botanist, and an amateur architect.<sup>193</sup> He had already built the Medical Hall and his own house to the east of the SPC. Possibly inspired

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<sup>190</sup> "The Old Lee Observatory Building: The Beauty of AUB's Architecture," *Outlook*, 25 2 (January 18, 2001): 4.

<sup>191</sup> Ibid.

<sup>192</sup> Charles A. Webster, "Post Hall," *Al-Kulliyah* 16 2 (Dec. 1929): 32.

<sup>193</sup> "Anecdotes of the Early Managers of the A.U.B.," *Students Union Gazette* (Christmas Issue, 1927): 39. ASC, AUB.

by his cousin's winning High Gothic design for the City College of New York in 1897, he gave his imagination free reign in the design of Post Hall.<sup>194</sup>

Fortified with machicolated towers, high walls, and protruding waterspouts, Post Hall's style is pseudo-Elizabethan. In the late 1890s Princeton University adopted a Tudor style under Woodrow Wilson's leadership because, in his words, "we added to Princeton the age of Oxford and Cambridge; we have added a thousand years to the history of Princeton by merely putting those lines in our buildings which point every man's imagination to the historic traditions of learning in the English-speaking race."<sup>195</sup> In the context of the SPC, however, Post Hall projected a hard-edged containment and a physical barrier to the extramural world (Figure 16). It turned its back on Bliss Street, recalling a militaristic, crusader architecture, with its undefined small entrances, dwarfed by top-heavy crenulations. Post Hall communicated not only a physical but also a psychological barrier to the extramural world. Perhaps Post chose such a design because the building was meant to preserve and protect its cabinets of archeological, zoological, and botanical curiosities, opened only under the strictest supervision.<sup>196</sup> Its purpose as a showcase, moreover, corresponded in function to the Peabody Museum at Harvard University and the Woods Cabinet at Amherst College.<sup>197</sup> To SPC's medical students,

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<sup>194</sup> "The College of the City of New York," 305-312.

<sup>195</sup> Woodrow Wilson quoted in Turner, 227

<sup>196</sup> Webster, 32.

<sup>197</sup> Bryant F. Tolles, Jr., *Architecture and Academe: College Buildings in New England Before 1860* (Hanover and London: University Press of New England, 2011), 117. Woods Cabinet attached to Lawrence Observatory was built in 1847-8, "to serve as a study and exhibition center for natural history, as well as astronomical observatory and college museum."

however, Post Hall “will be best remembered by medical graduates for examinations” held in the confines of its tower rooms.<sup>198</sup>

For all the strength of the College Hall’s colossal dimensions to withstand Ras Beirut’s exposure to powerful forces of nature, even with a “first rate watchdog,” Bliss wrote to his wife, walls are “an essential thing in this country [...] to cut off our grounds from the public.”<sup>199</sup> Although Amherst’s campus never was enclosed, walling the SPC campus consumed Bliss’s attention from the early 1870s. Bliss gave financial precedence to “walling the College premises in place of found[ing] a permanent scholarship.”<sup>200</sup> Noting the “striking contrast to the open lawns of my college in America,” a new SPC faculty member was told that the walls were “to keep the students in and to keep other people out.”<sup>201</sup> Yale College, one of the few walled colleges in New England, like the SPC faced the problem of the extension of the surrounding city and used walls to “create a quiet, private campus and nurture a self-contained, closely monitored community of students and faculty.”<sup>202</sup> At each stage of SPC’s expansion, with each additional acquisition of land, President Bliss ensured enough funds be set aside for walling college grounds.

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<sup>198</sup> Webster, 33.

<sup>199</sup> Bliss, *Letters*, 143, 162.

<sup>200</sup> Faculty Minutes, Jan. 9, 1877, 273; Faculty Minutes, Feb. 12, 1878, 298-99; Faculty Minutes, June 1, 1886, 520. ASC, AUB.

<sup>201</sup> Byron Porter Smith, “Golden Days, 1910-14,” *Al-Kulliyah*, 28 4 (April 1953), 19.

<sup>202</sup> Juliette Guilbert, “Something that Loves a Wall: The Yale University Campus, 1850-1920,” *New England Quarterly* 68 2 (June 1995): 262.

By keeping students within campus walls, SPC founders maintained a “close community [...] in which students would study, eat, sleep, and worship” apart from the chaos, pestilence, and tight quarters of city life.<sup>203</sup> In line with their Puritan New England collegiate models, the SPC faculty tightly monitored the life of this “academical village” whereby students and teachers shared the same temporal, physical, and productive space in strict hierarchical order.<sup>204</sup> Regulated by a rigorous academic and extracurricular schedule, the hours of the clock tracked student time and the college walls contained student space. Prohibitions governed student life; they were barred from the kitchen and the gatehouse, and if they went off campus without faculty permission, they faced severe reprimand and possible expulsion.<sup>205</sup> Even when students sought permission in advance with organized petitions, as when a group of literary students requested to have a picnic at Dubayyeh, a beach to the north of Beirut, they were forbidden.<sup>206</sup>

Indeed, the nature of the college’s enclosure most accurately fit the meaning of *hirm*, the Arabic word for campus. *Hirm* connotes a much more literal definition of enclosure than the English association of campus with a college green, even if a fenced one. For *hirm* refers to a sanctuary or protected haven. It implies an inviolable space of a sacred nature separate from the secular, mundane, extramural world of the streets. In this sense, perhaps SPC’s founders unwittingly upheld the local meanings of a self-contained space in contrast to the open lawns of New England colleges.

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<sup>203</sup> Gumprecht, 18.

<sup>204</sup> Turner, 3.

<sup>205</sup> Faculty Minutes, July 13, 1876, 259, ASC, AUB.

<sup>206</sup> Faculty Minutes, June 19, 1894, 258, ASC, AUB.



The walls also served another purpose. The 1900 SPC Annual Report boasted of the complete enclosure of all college grounds for the first time in its history. In so doing recalcitrant landowners of plots adjacent to the SPC were led to believe that the college did not care to purchase any more property, bringing them to the negotiating table on terms favorable to the SPC.<sup>207</sup> Instead of permanently sealing off the college grounds, the walls elastically widened at every opportunity to include more property within their confines. Continuously maintained and heightened, the walls were meant to keep students in, and most explicitly, to “protect the College against trespassers.”<sup>208</sup>

In 1901 the completion of the Administration Hall, or Main Gate, formalized the entryway to the circumscribed campus with the faculty vote to accept the architectural plans of Edward Pease Casey, a prominent New York architect. Located across from the College Hall and in between Ada Dodge Hall and Assembly Hall, its purpose would be to ensure “all visitors will be properly received at all times in a reception room. No students will leave or enter the grounds without passing under the notice of a responsible officer.”<sup>209</sup> Not for the last time the deep pockets of the Dodge family, particularly David S. Dodge, provided the funds for Casey’s design and the building costs.

Casey’s specialization in Civil War monuments, the Memorial Bridge across the Potomac River, and work on the Library of Congress befit a building whose job was to establish first impressions.<sup>210</sup> The Main Gate faced inwards on to the campus and

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<sup>207</sup> *SPC Annual Report*, 1866-1902, 179, ASC, AUB.

<sup>208</sup> Faculty Minutes, July 8, 1901, 587, ASC, AUB.

<sup>209</sup> Thirty-Fifth Annual Report of the Board of Managers, *Syrian Protestant College* (1901), 13, ASC, AUB.

outwards on to the street marking the meeting of the intramural world of the SPC with the extramural world of Ras Beirut. In keeping with the supersized scale of SPC's architecture, the Main Gate's mass was distributed longitudinally east to west along the street and centered on an elaborate keyhole-arched entryway, evocative of a triumphal arch (Figure 17). Notwithstanding the Main Gate's success in relieving the congestion and "infelicitous crowding of students," its disproportionate scale overwhelmed the unpaved, narrow Midhat Pasha Street.<sup>211</sup>

The addition of the Main Gate to the built landscape cinched the formative era of SPC's architecture. Morris K. Jesup, who was both president of SPC's New York-based Board of Trustees and New York's Natural History Museum, hosted a reception in 1904 to showcase a stone model of the SPC before it would be sent to the Louisiana Purchase Exposition.<sup>212</sup> Apparently the original model so impressed American visitors to the SPC in Beirut that they commissioned its reproduction for display at the St. Louis Fair of 1904, where it won a Gold Medal.<sup>213</sup> Built on a scale of one-sixteenth of an inch to a foot by Henry Harris Jessup, a veteran missionary long associated with the SPC, the model commemorated the Daniel Bliss era (Figure 18). Franklin Moore, SPC physician, captured Jessup in a black-and-white photograph dressed in black with a long white beard

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<sup>210</sup> "Edward P. Casey, Noted Architect, Designer of New York State Monuments at Antietam and Gettysburg Dies at 75," Obituary, *The New York Times*, (Jan. 3 1940).

<sup>211</sup> Thirty-Seventh Annual Report of the Board of Managers, *Syrian Protestant College* (1903), 10, ASC, AUB.

<sup>212</sup> James S. Dennis, D.D., "A Model of the Syrian Protestant College for the St. Louis Exposition," *The Assembly Herald; The Official Publication of the Presbyterian Church in the USA*, 10 4 (April 1904): 181-2.

<sup>213</sup> Jessup writes "the model of the campus and its buildings made by me in 1902 for the college I reproduced at the request of Morris K. Jesup, using one of the rooms in the American Museum of Natural History. It was enclosed in a mahogany and plate glass case and sent to the St. Louis Exposition, being awarded a gold medal." *Fifty-Three Years*, 306.

presenting his shining white SPC model with what appears to be a combination of piety and hubris.<sup>214</sup> The miniature “thirteen buildings reproduced by an exact model cut out of Mount Lebanon limestone,” gleamed in stark contrast against the dark background and rendered through the powerful medium of photography the very ivory towers of the enlightened model, the “city upon a hill.”<sup>215</sup> In his talk Morris Jesup emphasized the situation of the SPC in “that noble environment of mountain and sea which encircle landward and seaward that stately headland upon which the College stands.”<sup>216</sup> The natural and the built landscape fused; Ras Beirut determined the SPC’s prominence as much as the SPC architecture fixed Ras Beirut’s orientation.

Jessup’s model perhaps best epitomizes the Daniel Bliss era’s preoccupation with producing an impression of “respect and awe, unseen before, upon the students.”<sup>217</sup> The SPC now self-contained and set apart “like an island,” to recall Thomson’s words in reference to Ras Beirut, reached full spatial articulation in intramural terms. In 1911 the copy of Jessup’s model was summoned from its permanent home at the Natural History Museum in New York for display at the First Missionary Exhibition “The World in Boston.”<sup>218</sup> Not only built with a view, now the SPC campus was on view (Figure 19).

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<sup>214</sup> “The Pillar of the Syria Mission,” Jessup arrived in Beirut in 1856 to join the Syria Mission, then the faculty of the SPC. Penrose, 38.

<sup>215</sup> Dennis, 181-2.

<sup>216</sup> Ibid.

<sup>217</sup> Bliss, *Letters*, 108.

<sup>218</sup> Faculty Minutes, November 17, 1911, 186, ASC, AUB.

## **An Architecture of Inclusivity**

Second SPC president, Howard Sweetser Bliss ushered in an era of liberal Protestantism in the wake of the more conservative evangelical Protestantism of his father's tenure.<sup>219</sup> A second-generation missionary, Howard Bliss was born in 1860 in Lebanon and raised in Beirut until the age of sixteen. From an early age, he learned to appreciate the relationship of the college to its surroundings. En route to the U.S. to attend Amherst College he wrote home to Beirut, "As we steamed out of the harbor last night the view was something charming. First the hospital became prominent, then our house, then followed in succession Dr. Post's house and the College, never more commanding, with the pines below the Medical Building just beginning to be seen."<sup>220</sup> When he returned to Beirut in 1902 to assume SPC's presidency, he brought with him the influences of the Social Gospel and Progressive Movements current across colleges in the United States.<sup>221</sup> A member of the liberal branch of Congregationalism, Bliss refused to endorse the so-called "Declaration of Principles" because it contravened his "conscientious convictions."<sup>222</sup> Ever since the eruption of the Lewis Affair in 1882, when conservative SPC members, including Daniel Bliss and George E. Post, forced Professor Edwin Lewis to resign after he mentioned Charles Darwin in his commencement address, new faculty members were required to sign allegiance to Protestantism as "revealed truth

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<sup>219</sup> Betty S. Anderson, *The American University of Beirut; Arab Nationalism and Liberal Education*, Austin, Texas: UT Press 2011, 106.

<sup>220</sup> Howard Sweetser Bliss to Dear Family, July 20, 1878, Folder 25, Box 1, Series 3: Howard Sweetser Bliss. ASC, Amherst College.

<sup>221</sup> Anderson, 106.

<sup>222</sup> Penrose, 48. Howard Bliss to Daniel Bliss, Feb. 3, 1902, Folder 98, ASC, Amherst College.

and demonstrate the essential harmony between the Bible and all true science and philosophy.”<sup>223</sup>

At the same time, despite the abandonment of faculty adherence to strict evangelical Protestantism, college policy still mandated students’ attendance at daily prayers, Sunday chapel services, and regular Bible classes. By 1908 “certain Muslim students” were granted permission to attend Friday services at the mosque on Midhat Pasha Street, but the SPC faculty refused to budge on mandatory chapel attendance.<sup>224</sup> The following January 1909, in the wake of the Young Turk Revolution, these issues caused the largest demonstrations on campus yet; Muslim and Jewish students demanded the end of mandatory religious exercises. After several months of tense confrontation the faculty reached a compromise with the students and defused the demonstration, though not without a certain loss of credibility.<sup>225</sup> Not until 1915, when the Ottoman government promulgated the Education Law forbidding religious instruction to all non-Christian students, were SPC’s stringent religious requirements dropped.<sup>226</sup>

As with internal college policy, in some ways the continued expansion of the SPC’s built landscape represented continuity with the Daniel Bliss era, and in other ways the Howard Bliss era signified dynamic change in the relationship of the built campus to its surroundings. In 1910 the Faculty proposed to change the name of the SPC to the Ras

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<sup>223</sup> Jeha, 48.

<sup>224</sup> Faculty Minutes, October 29, 1908, 13, ASC, AUB.

<sup>225</sup> Norbert J. Scholz, “Foreign Education and Indigenous Reaction in late Ottoman Lebanon: Students and Teachers at the SPC in Beirut,” Vol. II (Ph.D Diss. Georgetown University, 1997), 175.

<sup>226</sup> Faith M. Hanna, *An American Mission: The Role of the American University of Beirut*, (Boston: Alphabet Press, 1979), 7; Stephen Penrose, 133-146.

Beirut University attesting to the college's identification with its local setting.<sup>227</sup> Bliss, with an eye well-trained on the significance of Ras Beirut's position, conjured up its image to his Anglo-American audiences that made Thomson's geometric depiction of Beirut in 1859 seem almost austere. He guided his listeners,

Fourteen days out of New York, one rounds the triangular promontory upon the northern side of which Beirut is built [...] after this turn the buildings of the College are seen facing the north, one hundred feet above the sea's level – fifteen substantial structures built of buff-colored sandstone or limestone, scattered over the long, narrow Campus, which stretches east and west for half a mile – its forty acres dotted with clumps of tress – cypress, pride of India, date-palm, fig, olive, oleander, banyan, carob, and pine; its rocky slopes adorned with gorse and made beautiful in Spring and Autumn with brilliant flowers. To the left of the College lies Beirut, a beautiful city of one hundred and twenty thousand inhabitants [...] Further to the left, dominating everything, there stretches north and south the long range of the Lebanon Mountains, its sixty miles of noble heights apparently culminating just above the Beirut promontory in Jabal Sunnin [...] To the right of the Campus, beyond the promontory's point, stretches into the West the Mediterranean Seas. When the eyes turn back and rest upon the Campus of the College, one's first impression is confirmed that few colleges in the world can boast of a site so noble, so salubrious, so fitted, moreover, for an institution of learning that seeks to dissipate prejudices, widen horizons, and give a sense of the noble largeness and grandeur of the symmetrically developed life.<sup>228</sup>

Clearly, Howard Bliss made inseparable the virtues of the progressive mission of the College with its Ras Beirut setting emphasizing the symbiotic relationship between the two.

In his first report to the Board of Trustees as president, Howard Bliss noted the significant addition of land purchased in 1902 that matched in scale the first ones made in

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<sup>227</sup> Faculty Minutes, March 17, 1910, 123, ASC, AUB.

<sup>228</sup> Forty-First Annual Report of the Board of Managers, *Syrian Protestant* 1907, 4-5, ASC, AUB.

1868.<sup>229</sup> While the land on the seaside plain north of the college row took several years to acquire because of its division into separately owned lots, large tracts of land east of the Medical Building and west of Ada Dodge Hall and the new dormitory, Daniel Bliss Hall, were acquired in 1902-1903. A substantial endowment, sustained by the Dodge family, the Jesup Foundation, and Rockefeller Foundation made these purchases possible. The resultant “West End expansion,” which included five substantial buildings raised in rapid succession, accommodated the separation of the “small boys” of the growing Preparatory School from the young men of the College. The barracks-like cubic design of these new structures further extended the westward line of the red-roofed buildings of the college row, further articulating the upper ridge of Ras Beirut.<sup>230</sup> Moreover, the securing of the land between “the base of the College slopes and the seashore” made the lower seaside edge of the campus contiguous with the upper ridge. This ensured that *the view from the college* to the sea would balance the *view of the college* from the sea (Figure 20).<sup>231</sup>

The balanced relationship between the built and the natural landscape paralleled Howard Bliss’s more egalitarian approach to the college administration. In a highly publicized speech in Beirut, he defined SPC’s goal “to produce within our walls the ideal Ottoman Empire in miniature [...] so you will remain a Moslem, you a Jew, you a Christian, [...] but we shall be bound together by the underlying desire, to be true to

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<sup>229</sup> Thirty-Seventh Annual Report of the Board of Managers, *Syrian Protestant College*, 1902-1903, 8, ASC, AUB.

<sup>230</sup> Penrose, 117.

<sup>231</sup> Forty-First Annual Report of the Board of Managers, *Syrian Protestant College*, 1902-1903, 5, ASC, AUB.

Almighty God.”<sup>232</sup> In practice, however, these words did not play out in terms of administrative policies. For Bliss never granted equal status to all members of SPC’s faculty. Indeed, not until 1920 were Arab professors granted voting privileges on the college’s faculty (further discussed in Chapter 4).<sup>233</sup> And yet the symmetrical, egalitarian image Bliss associated with Ras Beirut’s natural landscape materialized in a new type of building. The hopes that the SPC would fulfill the images Bliss associated with Ras Beirut’s natural landscape were pinned to the addition of West Hall.

In many ways, West Hall was the antithesis of College Hall. From 1910 on the faculty and students anticipated the building of a new student center. Unlike the top-down planning and building of College Hall, West Hall was a collective effort. West Hall was the brainchild of the young Syrian and American teachers, or staffites, on two-year contracts at the college and was conceived in Ras Beirut. Described in terms remarkably similar to the Williams College Haystack Meeting of 1806 that saw the founding of the ABCFM, these young men convened in 1906,

one cold and stormy night that winter, and built in fancy a mighty house for the happiness of students. They placed it near the refectory where men could dry off and wait in comfort for the last final rush for food! They made provision for game rooms and quiet rooms for writing and study [...] a common room, they added an auditorium [...]; and aware of the social force of simple religion, of religion free from metaphysical distinctions, they made this ‘castle in Spain’ the home of the religious organization of the College.<sup>234</sup>

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<sup>232</sup> Howard S. Bliss, “The Flower of Culture,” Bliss Family Papers, Folder 28 (May 1, 1909), ASC, Amherst College.

<sup>233</sup> Makdisi, *Faith*, 158.

<sup>234</sup> Franklin T. Moore, *Al-Kulliyah* 5, 5:129 (March 1914); Penrose, 118. The way Moore and Penrose describe the idea for a student center shares much in common with the description of the Williams College Haystack meeting that resulted in the founding of the ABCFM. See William



In its attention to student life, West Hall made the SPC modern like Harvard University's two student centers: the Philips Brooks House, for social service, charity and student religious activities, and the Harvard Union, a center for student life and fellowship.<sup>235</sup> West Hall professed progressive-era values in its dedication to "the making of men" and as the place "where religion was not to be taught as a doctrine, but absorbed as a life;" it was described as the "Child of Promise" and the "meat, bones, and brains" of the campus.<sup>236</sup> SPC's West Hall would produce "strong men and good citizens" to serve the world as Amherst College in the early nineteenth century prepared young men to "civilize and evangelize" the world.<sup>237</sup> If College Hall represented SPC's formative era in its awesome power, then West Hall, represented the gradual adjustment and adaptation of the SPC into an open, secular, progressive-era institution, in line with the trend in higher education across the United States.

The high expectations attached to West Hall are evident in faculty minutes, annual reports to the Board, and *al-Kulliyah*, the college newspaper. SPC Professor of Engineering, James Patch drew up in-house plans of the building and submitted them to the architectural firm of Parish and Schroeder in New York for finishing. Patch outlined three ideals: that the building should be placed in as central a position as possible on the campus, that it express welcome from the exterior to the interior, from the outside in, and

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Strong, *The Story of the American Board, An Account of the First Hundred Years of the ABCFM* (Boston: The Pilgrim Press, 1910), 7-16.

<sup>235</sup> "Proposed New Social Building," *Al-Kulliyah*, 1, 6 (July 1910), 216-219, ASC/AUB.

<sup>236</sup> "West Hall," *Al-Kulliyah*, 3, 3 (Jan. 1912) 25; "Robert H. West Hall, A Child of Promise," *Al-Kulliyah*, Jan. 1913; West Hall, p. 24..

<sup>237</sup> Bayard Dodge, "Life in the College and Life in the World," *Student Union Gazette*, Jan.-Feb. 1913, 49.

that it be “the center of the social and spiritual life of the university, not attained by stone and mortar but by spirit breathed into noble structure.”<sup>238</sup>

West Hall’s actual form realized its ideals (Figure 21). A spacious covered porch and open terraces on either side emphasized the main entrance and encouraged outdoor “air gatherings” to uphold its welcoming purpose. Once inside the large central hall and grand staircase greeted the visitor, who may be “startled by the stray beams of sunlight” streaming from the ceiling tiles interspersed with glass. The common room for collegiate “intermingling to promote good fellowship” was located to the right of the staircase. Also on the first floor were a gymnasium, a ticket room, coatroom, and a small lift to provide refreshments to the upper floors. The second-floor auditorium with a stage fit 600 people.<sup>239</sup> A room for the YMCA and a room for the school newspaper, *al-Kulliyah*, were also accommodated on the second floor, meeting the requirement of the building’s social and spiritual life. On the third floor, a roof garden with tables for coffee and ice cream in spring and summer became a roller skating rink in winter. Finally, the basement boasted the first bowling alley in Beirut (Figure 22).<sup>240</sup>

As luck would have it, war accompanied the period immediately before and after West Hall’s inauguration. The short Ottoman-Italian War spilled into Beirut’s harbor in 1912 followed by the outbreak of the much more devastating First World War in 1914. Two and a half months after Bliss ceremonially broke ground for West Hall’s foundations, Italian warships bombarded the Ottoman fleet at the Beirut harbor on

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<sup>238</sup> James Patch, “Robert H. West Hall,” *Al-Kulliyah* 2 5 (March 1911), 149.

<sup>239</sup> Seating capacity comparisons: the Royal Cairo Opera House, 1869, had a seating capacity of 850; Casino du Liban, opened in 1959, could seat 1000 and Piccadilly Theatre, the first theatre of Ras Beirut built in 1965, could seat close to 700. For its time, West Hall’s size was quite large.

<sup>240</sup> Patch, “West Hall.”

February 24, 1912. From the clock tower of College Hall, the highest point in Ras Beirut, Bliss reported to the Board of Trustees “the scene on the College campus was unique in the history of the Institution.”<sup>241</sup> For not only were students, faculty, and members of their families gathered on campus, but also “hundreds of people” from outside the SPC walls flooded through the Main Gate. As long as they carried no weapons, they could seek shelter within the college walls. Bliss directed the placement of the American flag on the lightening rod of the clock tower in addition to six flags raised strategically on other SPC buildings. In his letters to the Board, he noted the logistics of maintaining hospital functions, of telegraphing students’ families of their safety, and of meeting with representatives of some of Beirut’s most prominent families, the Bayhum, Ghandur, and Baydun families to ensure “that special arrangement would be made for them in case there was any danger, and not for them only but for any who might wish to find shelter in the College grounds. I notified the Consulate that upon my own responsibility I was doing this.”<sup>242</sup> The Italian bombardment of Beirut, in other words, gave Bliss the opportunity to redeem SPC’s tarnished image associated with the suppression of religious freedom in 1909.

The fortress-like scale and design of SPC’s architecture was put at the service of its neighbors. College Hall’s clock-cum-lookout tower actually served the function its form symbolized. With the sanction of its doctors’ medical relief to the city’s wounded, Bliss remarked that the College finally stood “as a symbol of kindly protection in the minds of the people of Beirut, both Moslems and Christians. Mrs. Nickoley, wife of the

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<sup>241</sup> Howard Bliss to SPC Board of Trustees, Feb. 27, 1912, Bliss Family Papers, ASC, Amherst College.

<sup>242</sup> Ibid.

Head of SPC's School of Commerce, recalled the frenzy of the mob in central Beirut on the morning of the Italian bombardment. The one word she understood was “‘*al Kulliyah* [the College], Ras Beirut’ repeated again and again – not in anger but in gratitude that there was such a place in the city where refuge might be had.”<sup>243</sup> Even if these reports were exaggerated, they heralded the more proactive stance the SPC assumed in the troubled years ahead. For the SPC provided safe haven to not only its intramural charges, but also the extramural inhabitants of Ras Beirut putting to practice the sanctity of the Arabic word for campus, *hirm*.

Cleveland H. Dodge represented the third Dodge generation of SPC financial backing in his funding of the building and furnishing of West Hall. In 1913, his son Bayard Dodge joined the SPC as West Hall's newly appointed director and executive secretary of the YMCA. With its inauguration in February 1914 West Hall completed the “college row” of the upper campus. Although a large building, its position behind the president's house, in between Ada Dodge and Jesup Hall, did not dominate the built campus as did College, Post, or even Ada Dodge Hall with its modest tower. In symbolic terms, however, West Hall represented the central link in the gradual easing of college policy towards its students and its surrounding community. More significantly, West Hall reflected a shift in attitude from a focus on the power of stones and mortar to impress to an emphasis on the potential of its students; for “not buildings, but men make a college; and not teachers, but students, are the final test and measure of the quality of a college.”<sup>244</sup>

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<sup>243</sup> Ibid.

<sup>244</sup> “Proposed New Social Building.”

The First World War erupted a few months after West Hall's inauguration. Ras Beirut convulsed through the ensuing military stranglehold and human suffering on an unimaginable scale. Except for two weeks in 1917, the SPC remained open for the duration of the war, providing medical aid and relief work to both civilian and Ottoman military. In his 1916-1917 Annual Report to the Board, Howard Bliss wrote of the centrality of West Hall to saving the life of the college and the community. Evidently exhausted, Bliss wrote of West Hall in scrawling, loopy handwriting as heroically staving off desperation in harrowing times:

West Hall [...] is an untold blessing to the whole university. The past three years have brought us many strange experiences. We had silent and mysterious wartime visitors which have suddenly risen to the surface of the sea and disclosed themselves to our unaccustomed astounded eyes. Great and portentous birds of the air have sometimes two winged sometimes four winged – now dropping huge exploding eggs as they hurtled over this city [...] Men and women and children have been deported to the interior. Mail communications have been slow and interrupted. Sinister rumors have filled the air, hopes deferred have made the heart sick. And wonderful has been the ministration of West Hall during all this period. It has soothed and comforted and strengthened. It has kept aglow the finest friendship. It has encouraged as never before the singing of College songs – all the old ones and many new ones. It has done a great work of diversion without losing its power of inspiration. Concerts, lectures, plays, bowling, skating, billiards, the piano, the phonograph - all have had their share in amusing the big SPC family, while everyone says what could we have done without West Hall?<sup>245</sup>

West Hall grounded college and community life as center of the built landscape, acting as the keystone in the arch of SPC's college row. In 1920, the formation of the West Hall Brotherhood replaced the Ottoman banned YMCA to promote inter-religious fellowship

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<sup>245</sup> Howard Bliss, "Fifty-First Annual Report," *Syrian Protestant College*, 1916-1917, (Aug. 14, 1917), 70-73. ASC, AUB.

and cooperation.<sup>246</sup> The Brotherhood's motto, moreover, stood in stark contrast to the words associated with College Hall. For the caveat of Daniel Bliss's famous proclamation at College Hall's cornerstone laying ceremony in 1871 is in the last sentence that reads, "But it will be impossible for anyone to continue with us long without knowing what we believe to be the truth and our reasons for that belief." The West Hall Brotherhood emphasized a common humanity and understanding in its profession that "the realm in which we share is vastly greater than that in which we differ."<sup>247</sup> While College Hall embodied an architecture of monumentality, West Hall represented a greater responsiveness of the college now turned university to the context of its diverse surroundings.

### **Conclusion**

From 1870 to 1920 the SPC's landscape at Ras Beirut grew from a few scattered plots of garden farms on twenty acres to a campus of twenty-five buildings on nearly fifty acres.<sup>248</sup> College Hall and West Hall mark the bookends of this definitive era of SPC's architectural incarnation of a New England college landscape. On the one hand, College Hall embodied the authoritarian features of early New England college campus architecture, and on the other, West Hall represented a greater responsiveness of the SPC in the context its diverse surroundings. Clearly New England origins determined the

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<sup>246</sup> Samir Khalaf, "New England Puritanism and Liberal Education in the Middle East; The American University of Beirut as a Cultural Transplant," in *Cultural Transitions in the Middle East*, ed. Serif Mardin (Leiden: Brill 1994), 73.

<sup>247</sup> Penrose, 300; Anderson, 72.

<sup>248</sup> Howard Bliss speech to John Finley of the State University of New York, Albany, NY, April 1919, Bliss Family Papers, ASC, Amherst College.

initial model for the SPC's built landscape. But the SPC gradually shed its New England association in its increasing identification with Ras Beirut linking the expanding city of Beirut with the college upon the hill. In 1909, Howard Bliss noted in a letter to his wife,

The day has been notable in one respect. At about four o'clock the first car of the trolley line passed the College several times. I understand that passengers will not be carried until Monday. The noise of the passing cars will be more or less annoying for some time. Later on we shall get accustomed to it – but more and more as time goes on we shall feel less secluded on our lovely grounds.<sup>249</sup>

As much as missionaries claimed to be “making history out here very fast,” the physical and cultural response of Ras Beirut made their history possible.<sup>250</sup> After the death of Howard Bliss in 1920, the mayor of Beirut, Umar Da-uq renamed Midhat Pasha Street Bliss Street in honor of Daniel and Howard Bliss.<sup>251</sup> Paved long before Ras Beirut's most famous street, Hamra Street, Bliss Street grew out of SPC's college row to become the first east-west thoroughway of Ras Beirut from which the subsequent north-south arteries extended (Figure 23). A few years later, the municipal committee under the French mandate named five additional streets on SPC's circumference after members of its original faculty.<sup>252</sup> George Post Street, Van Dyck Street, Wortabet Street, and Graham Street mark SPC's east edge and Bayard Dodge Street its northwest. Furthermore, in the 1930s, the renovators of the clock tower took the advice of Sheikh Mohammed Barbir,

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<sup>249</sup> Howard Bliss to Amy Blatchford Bliss, July 2, 1909, Box 1, Folder 119, ASC, Amherst College.

<sup>250</sup> Bliss, *Letters*, 150.

<sup>251</sup> Dodge, 50. Edward Nickoley to David Stuart Dodge, June 22, 1920, File 2, Box 2, A.A.: 2.3: Presidency, ASC, AUB.

<sup>252</sup> *Student Union Gazette*, 39.

Timekeeper of Beirut and Imam of the Umari Mosque, who asked that the clock be raised above the bell since he relied on it for the call to prayer (Figure 24).<sup>253</sup>

While SPC's founders intended their buildings to legitimize their presence and embody their missionary ideology, instead their architecture took on an increasingly local significance that became integral to Ras Beirut and thickened its urban fabric, in a way that missionary ideology never did. While some locals may have viewed the SPC as a western expansionist scheme that ate up all the territory from the seaside to Bliss Street, for the most part local response accommodated the college in temporal and spatial terms, and embraced it as an integral part of Ras Beirut's future (Figure 25).<sup>254</sup>

In its origins the college clearly embodied a spatial memory specific to New England. That memory receded as the college gradually bonded to Ras Beirut in "an idyllic twinship."<sup>255</sup> Indeed, the college's character outgrew its New England missionary association of the late nineteenth century to assume associations of a simultaneously global and local scale in the late twentieth century. The university took great pride in the assertion that of the fifty delegates present at the signing of the United Nations Charter in San Francisco in 1945, nineteen were AUB graduates, more than any other university in the world.<sup>256</sup> At the same time, to many of its graduates the university was inseparable

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<sup>253</sup> "The Library Buildings," University Libraries, American University of Beirut, <http://www.aub.edu.lb/ulibraries/about/Pages/buildings.aspx>, accessed October 1, 2012.

<sup>254</sup> Assem Shiharu, *Ain Mreiseh: Safha musharefa min tarikh Beirut wa dawr wataniyya wa qawmiyya la' yamout* (Ain Mreiseh: an Honorable Page from Beirut's History and a National and United Cycle that does not Die), Beirut: n.d., 201.

<sup>255</sup> Khalaf, "An Idyllic Twinship."

<sup>256</sup> Nada Al-Awar, "Signs of Peace," *Main Gate* 3 3 (Spring 2005). Carleton S. Coon, Jr, notes "the educational backgrounds of all the official delegates at the founding convocation of the United Nations in San Francisco in 1945" and the institution that had the largest number of graduates was AUB with nineteen alumni, in *Daniel Bliss and the Founding of the American*



from its association with Fayssal's Restaurant directly across from the Main Gate on Bliss Street. Fayssal's represented university's alter ego and the heyday of the intellectual and revolutionary ethos of the 1950s and 1960s until it closed its doors during the Civil War. Known as the "University of Fayssal," students claimed it graduated more Arab leaders than the college!<sup>257</sup>

Though the college molded the social and cultural shape of Ras Beirut, much of its life extended beyond the walls of the college. The next three chapters explore the community circles that intersected with the college and with each other from the community of Ras Beirut's Anglo-American community, to the Arab Protestant community of Ras Beirut, both closely associated with the college, and finally to the community that pre-dated the presence of the college, the Ras Beirut's Sunni Muslim and Orthodox Christian community. Each of these community circles narrated their identification with Ras Beirut, described in exceptional terms, through their experiential relationship to place.

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*University of Beirut*, ed. Carleton S. Coon, Jr (Washington, D.C.: The Middle East Institute, 1989) viii. In June 2013 an exhibition at West Hall was held to commemorate the nineteen former students and graduates who attended the 1945 meeting and who represented five countries: Iraq, Iran, Syria, Saudi Arabia, and Lebanon. Among the five-person Lebanese delegation was Angela Jurdak Khoury, daughter of AUB Professor Mansur Jurdak as the "only woman among those involved in drafting the UN Charter." Mary Faddoul, "AUB honors students, alumni who helped author U.N. Charter in 1945," *The Daily Star*. June 12, 2013, 4.

<sup>257</sup> Rebeiz, *Rizqallah*, 190.

### CHAPTER 3

## THE ANGLO-AMERICAN LIVES OF RAS BEIRUT

### Introduction:

Ras Beirut's distance from the densely populated city center not only created the ideal setting for a "college on a hill," but it also gave its Anglo-American community both the room to grow and insularity to build separate lives. To this community Ras Beirut was "a small town within a big city" that described a place for them to call home.<sup>258</sup> Within two months of her arrival, Charlotte Allen Ward wrote to her Massachusetts family of her immediate sense of belonging in Ras Beirut:

We feel that this is really *home* for us, not the particular house but *the place* in general. Certainly we hope that it will not be necessary to make a change in location of work for some years to come, if at all. I will draw a diagram so that you may see the location of the house in respect to other houses.<sup>259</sup>

From such extracts this chapter takes a microscopic look into the nooks and crannies of the intricate network of the Anglo-American community of Ras Beirut. This community's long-term association with the college made them one of Ras Beirut's oldest communities. Through the writings of some of its longest standing members, including Charlotte Ward, Edward Nickoley, Bayard Dodge and Laurens Seelye, this chapter examines the lived lives of the Anglo-American community and how they projected themselves as simultaneously part of and apart from Ras Beirut. On the one hand, they displayed a strong sense of rootedness in their established presence in Ras

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<sup>258</sup> Esther Ward, "Memoir V: Memories of a Childhood in the Middle East," (n.p., 1996), in Paul Langdon Ward Papers (in process), Archives and Special Collections, Amherst College, 18.

<sup>259</sup> Charlotte Allen Ward to Family, November 27, 1911, Charlotte Allen Ward Papers, Archives and Special Collections, Mount Holyoke College, South Hadley, Massachusetts.

Beirut against the backdrop of the spectacular college landscape. On the other, they articulated a distinct separateness of American identity that reinforced racial and cultural boundaries and produced a “look but don’t touch” mentality.

From the 1870s to 1920, the community of Anglo-American families that settled around the Syrian Protestant College (SPC/AUB) numbered about a hundred people, small enough to gather for Thanksgiving dinner. After 1920, the community grew so large that several Thanksgiving dinners had to be held and “then the idea was given up – the number of Americans was too many for any such celebration. We simply had a service at the College Chapel, addressed by the Consul General who read the President’s Proclamation.”<sup>260</sup> The growth of the community paralleled the college’s transformation in 1920 into the American University of Beirut (AUB). This shift connoted the decidedly re-centered identity of the community from the initial Protestant missionary enterprise to a thriving secular Americanism associated with Ras Beirut in the twentieth century. The association with the anti-imperialist rhetoric of Wilsonian self-determination as a reassertion of the U.S.’s disinterested benevolence underlined a renewed sense of mission in national terms. As second SPC president, Howard Bliss personified this spirit in his role as the “modern missionary.” Not only did he speak Arabic fluently but he addressed the Great Powers of the Paris Peace Conference in 1919 on behalf of Arab self-determination.<sup>261</sup> And before he assumed the position of third college president, Bayard Dodge, then West Hall director, captured the immediacy of the moment writing in the same year, “whatever happens in the next six months, our country and our college have

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<sup>260</sup> Esther Ward, “Memoir V,” 13.

<sup>261</sup> Makdisi, *Faith*, 136. Also the title of his article: Howard S. Bliss, “The Modern Missionary,” *The Atlantic Monthly* (May 1920), 664-675.

gained such a prestige that our opportunity will be greater than ever before. Perhaps no institution in the world has such an opportunity to leaven the Mohammeden world and what is fast becoming the very centre of the map, as our college has.”<sup>262</sup>

Reframing the original evangelical intention with a decidedly secular one, the Anglo-American community continued to picture their lives in exceptional and often scenic terms.<sup>263</sup> Howard Bliss’s sister, Mary Bliss Dale invoked Ras Beirut’s natural landscape in her letter to him to show her delight at his acceptance to succeed their father as SPC president. She wrote, “my heart aches for the Upper Montclair people, what will they do? I think some will come and colonize at Pigeon Island. Poor, poor creatures.”<sup>264</sup> Mary Dale knew, of course, that the Pigeon Rocks were immediately recognizable as a natural feature of Ras Beirut’s landscape and not at all a habitable island (Figure 26). To the Bliss siblings the Pigeon Rocks not only served as an identifiable symbol of Ras Beirut, but also as a landmark of familial understanding. As these “modern missionaries” focused their sight on the physical features of Ras Beirut, however, they often lost sight of its social makeup. Indeed, their offhand and detached mention of locals made them almost incidental to Anglo-American lives.<sup>265</sup> So incidental, in fact, that when a young Armenian Beirutite murdered an Anglo-American doctor in 1926, the manner in which the

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<sup>262</sup> Bayard Dodge to Acting President Edward F. Nickoley, July 14, 1919, AA 2.3 Presidency, ASC, Jafet Library, AUB.

<sup>263</sup> Makdisi, *Faith*; Robert Vitalis, *America’s Kingdom: Mythmaking on the Saudi Oil Frontier* (London: Verso Books, 2009).

<sup>264</sup> Mary Bliss Dale to Howard Bliss, Jan. 25, 1902, Folder 156, Box 2, Series 6: Mary Bliss Dale, Bliss Family Papers, ASC, Amherst College.

<sup>265</sup> Barbara Reeves-Ellington, *Domestic Frontiers, Gender, Reform, and American Interventions in the Ottoman Balkans and the Near East* (Amherst, Boston: University of Massachusetts Press, 2013), 128-9. In Bulgaria too, missionaries rarely made mention of locals, “often rendered [them] quasi-invisible by not using their full names or not naming them at all.”

Anglo-American community portrayed the murder completely disregarded the racial ramifications of the murder itself.

At the same time, the particular subjectivities of these lived lives and the changes experienced over time make sweeping generalizations about the Anglo-American community problematic. The very individuality of these lives speaks to “the contradictions of how cross cultural encounters simultaneously reinforced cultural boundaries and expanded them, and how transnational identities played a role in both processes.”<sup>266</sup> Cultural boundaries that may have been clear at one point shifted according to individual and community circumstances. These intensely inter-connected Anglo-Americans lived, wrote, thought, and travelled between worlds and built a transnational community network while shaping their own lives in the distinct context of Ras Beirut. Furthermore, the local community remembered the Anglo-American community long after their departure and appropriated them as integral to the relationship of people to place in the making of Ras Beirut.

### **Charlotte Ward’s World**

At the start of the First World War, Charlotte Allen Ward described her neighborhood of Ras Beirut that is “partly because of its position, farthest place in the city from the Lebanon Mountains, and partly because it is the American quarter, the quarter of refuge.”<sup>267</sup> Charlotte Ward’s characterization of Ras Beirut as American suggests an appropriation of place that reflected the community’s long residence there. More than any other source, her more than four hundred letters written from 1911 to 1931

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<sup>266</sup> Fleischmann, “I Only Wish I Had a Home,” 112.

<sup>267</sup> Charlotte Ward, Nov. 14, 1914, ASC, MHC.

provides a comprehensive epistolary view of the Anglo-American community of Ras Beirut. Through the window of her letters she conveys the texture of early twentieth century Ras Beirut as a backdrop to the daily hum of everyday life, tempered by the highs and lows of child rearing, academic, and seasonal routines all the while conveying an intense sense of belonging and place-rootedness.<sup>268</sup>

Charlotte Ward's life in Ras Beirut began in 1911 when the SPC recruited her husband, Edwin St. John Ward as professor of surgery to fill the place left by the death in 1909 of George E. Post, one of the college's "founding fathers." Charlotte Ward, a graduate of Mt. Holyoke College, and Edwin St. John Ward, a graduate of Amherst College, met at an American Board of Commissions for Foreign Missions (ABCFM) missionary conference in Boston in 1906 and married in 1907.<sup>269</sup> They left the U.S. immediately after their marriage to serve as ABCFM missionaries first in Diyarbekir located in what is today eastern Turkey. After a few years there where Edwin worked single-handedly as a medical missionary, he submitted his resignation to accept the offer to practice medicine and teach at the SPC. Excited by the move from the more remote Ottoman interior to the port city of Beirut, Charlotte nonetheless expressed apprehension about the transition. In Diyarbekir the Wards lived amongst the locals with a handful of Americans. The much larger American community of Ras Beirut, which comprised both the "College circle" and the Anglo-American Syria Mission community, daunted her.<sup>270</sup>

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<sup>268</sup> Some years saw up to forty letters written, others barely one.

<sup>269</sup> "Medical Missionaries Wed, Ceremony at Bride's Home," Longmeadow, *Springfield Republican* (May 8, 1907), Charlotte Ward Papers, ASC, MHC.

<sup>270</sup> Charlotte Ward to Family, Nov. 14, 1911, ASC, MHC; She writes "when I went to the Station Prayermeeting last evening, I discovered that there were some twenty or thirty Americans and English that I had not even seen."

She wrote, “I’d been out of civilization for a number of years and I didn’t know anyone in the American community there in Beirut [...] I felt awkward and I felt if I could only get away for a little while into civilization, I could meet the community better.”<sup>271</sup>

Compared to Diyarbekir Ras Beirut meant civilization, and specifically an American one. By now the community’s prestige was based on almost a half century of association with the college. The configuration of Anglo-American identity was well-rehearsed both within and without the community. From the very first months of settling into Ras Beirut, Charlotte proudly boasted of her husband’s perfect fit at the college. She explained that

the students said he [Edwin] is considered the finest surgeon in the locality, and he has had several of the other practicing men from the city and the Lebanon, French and German as well as Syrian and Turkish, come to watch him operate and call him in consultation. The students are especially enthusiastic over the way that he makes it possible for them to learn and even lets them do a goodly part in the operating work and clinics. It is said that Dr. Post [his predecessor] considered that the students were in his way, while he had nothing to do with other doctors if he could help it; it is in contrast with his nervous sharp manner that Edwin’s patience and quietness are showing up.<sup>272</sup>

Not only was Edwin considered a new and improved version of George Post, but President Howard Bliss, the quintessential modern missionary, held Edwin in high esteem and “already turns to him [Edwin] with confidence and good will for advice and help,” promising that he is “going to have a large part in the determination of what the College is to be and to stand for.”<sup>273</sup>

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<sup>271</sup> Charlotte Ward interviewed by her son, Paul L. Ward, Oct. 9, 1968, ASC, MHC.

<sup>272</sup> Charlotte Ward to Earl Ward, November 22, 1911, ASC, MHC.

<sup>273</sup> Ibid.

In another of her earliest letters Charlotte Ward drew a map of her street to indicate the houses of her Anglo-American neighbors (Figure 27). Along what is today Bliss Street, Charlotte Ward labeled her house and those of her neighbors: the Dormans, the Websters, the Grahams, the Porters, the Moores, the Carharts, and the Blisses. To the west, she drew in the medical buildings of the college and to the east the Prussian Johanniter Hospital, built by the Knights of St. John, where the SPC doctors, including her husband, practiced and taught until the SPC built its own hospital facilities in the next decade.

The advantages of living as part of such a settled Anglo-American community stood in stark contrast to the rudimentary conditions of the missionary life experienced in Diyarbekir. In Ras Beirut, Charlotte Ward's frantic social life involved receiving callers almost every day, hosting fellow missionaries en route to and from the interior through Beirut's port, and attending community receptions and gatherings (Figure 28). Down the street from Charlotte Ward lived Mrs. Porter (no. 4), wife of Harvey Porter, another Amherst College graduate and professor of history since 1870. Mrs. Porter eased Charlotte Ward's way into the Ras Beirut circle with both social and practical advice.<sup>274</sup> She arranged calls to introduce Charlotte Ward "to the English and American ladies," and also provided a "maid service. That is, she trained cooks, servants, and after she had got one well trained, she'd give that girl to one of the new comers."<sup>275</sup> Evidently this informal orientation to the Anglo-American community operated like a well-oiled machine. The ready availability of domestic help made "the women of the community

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<sup>274</sup> Penrose, 61. Harvey Porter was one of original college faculty.

<sup>275</sup> Charlotte Ward to Family, November 21, 1911, ASC, MHC.



freer than many of their contemporaries in the States.”<sup>276</sup> Although Charlotte Ward missed Diyarbekir, where after three years she finally “began to speak Turkish fairly freely with the women [and] felt useful,” at Ras Beirut she found that “it is fine to be able to talk over things with others, instead of going ahead on our own responsibility as we had to do in Diyarbekir, learning by our own mistakes.”<sup>277</sup> Charlotte Ward distinguished the Anglo-Americans of Ras Beirut as “a fine looking set of men and women” on display in her imagination she wrote, “every once in a while I imagine how much Mother will enjoy meeting them, when she comes to visit.”<sup>278</sup>

Charlotte Ward’s description of her Ras Beirut neighborhood is as revealing for its inclusions as for its exclusions. On her street she listed only her Anglo-American neighbors situated in relation to the features of the natural landscape devoid of any local presence. She writes,

As I make the *plans of the house and its environment* I find that there is need of explanation. I have not indicated other houses besides those marked but we have two or three small ones between us and the Dormans, several huts along the alleyway leading out from our garden to the street in front of Dr. Graham’s house, and many along that street. There is a decided slope between our house and the Grahams’ and so we look out over these small houses on that street onto the bay and the far end of the mountains. The colors on those mountains are glorious, particularly at the sunset time; and the water of the bay is a joy always. Mrs. Porter was telling me that it is the custom here to take a walk to the shore to watch the waves just as a big storm is coming up in winter. They

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<sup>276</sup> Grace Dodge Guthrie, *Legacy to Lebanon*, (Richmond, Virginia: Grace Dodge Guthrie, 1984, 1992), 89.

<sup>277</sup> Charlotte Ward interviewed by Paul Ward; Charlotte Ward to Family, January 16<sup>th</sup>, 1912, ASC, MHC.

<sup>278</sup> Charlotte Ward to Family, November 27, 1911 and November 14, 1911 respectively, ASC, MHC.

must be fine then. We can hear the surf from the house, but it is faint most of the time.<sup>279</sup>

Charlotte Ward's sights, sounds, and textures evoke the senses of the natural landscape (Figure 29). Her social points of reference, however, are exclusively Anglo-American to the extent that the unmarked smaller houses, dismissed as nondescript huts, are overlooked and overshadowed by the draw of the view beyond. On the edge of the Mediterranean Sea and backed by the Lebanon Mountains, Ras Beirut's setting provided the Anglo-American community a spectacular stage to display their extraordinary lives.

In 1911, the same year the Wards moved to Ras Beirut, Rachel Hall depicted the scene from her window on the other side of the College with remarkably detailed intensity. Granddaughter of Harvey Porter, she gave the landscape a leading role in her childhood memory, turning "site into sight, places and spaces into visual image."<sup>280</sup> She remembers,

spread before me was a magnificent view of the sea, blue and sparkling, with sailboats sailing on it. Far across the water was the purple line of mountains marching to the north. Directly below me was the scrubby hillside dropping to the narrow sea plain with its cottages surrounded by their gardens. It was this view I wanted! I was an early riser, and every morning I would go to the window to watch the ever-changing view of calm sparkling scenes with white sailboats, or perhaps black tramp steamers making for the harbor. One morning is especially etched in my memory. It was before the sun had risen above the Eastern Mountains. The whole scene was shining gold! The sea, the sky and even the distant mountains were all shades of gold! I stood spellbound and watched the gold gradually fade and change to the normal blues and purples [...] I have never forgotten this scene, and it has often come to mind to raise my spirits when I have been far from home.<sup>281</sup>

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<sup>279</sup> Charlotte Ward to Family, November 27, 1911, ASC, MHC.

<sup>280</sup> Mitchell, "Holy Landscapes," 198.

<sup>281</sup> Rachel Hall, *Memories of Childhood Growing up in Beirut – Lebanon, 1905-1923* (n.p.: Rachel Hall, 2001). *Underline in the original.*

Not only were these Ras Beirut vistas pictured in letters or memoirs, they were also embodied in situ. In a remarkably creative instance, a Ras Beirut landmark was cast a role at a masquerade party. Charlotte Ward described the occasion when “we asked the children to come each representing a college [...] Sanborn had the most elaborate get-up, a lighthouse with a real light at top and a straight gown of horizontal black and white stripes representing the lighthouse on the Ras for West Point, and Grace and Margaret [Dodge] were delightfully dressed as William and Mary in regular old-English style” (Figure 30).<sup>282</sup> The personification of so quintessential a Ras Beirut landmark, the black and white striped lighthouse on its westernmost point, underlines the extent to which the community internalized and in this case literally incarnated Ras Beirut by locating American points of reference in it. In a sense their reverence for the landscape and its landmarks belied their discomfort with genuine local exchange and interaction.

While they enjoyed the physical landscape with strolls by the sea, hikes through the mountains, and setting up summer homes in the hills, the Anglo-American community of Ras Beirut kept apart from locals and rarely engaged in so-called interracial relations. Partly because of the college’s use of English as its language of instruction Anglo-Americans no longer needed to speak Arabic; instead locals needed to speak English in their dealings with the college.<sup>283</sup> The decision to make English the language of instruction in the late 1870s was based on “the belief among the Americans, including the college president, that English was *the* language of modern civilization.”<sup>284</sup>

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<sup>282</sup> Charlotte Ward to Family, March 3, 1929, ASC, MHC.

<sup>283</sup> Tibawi, “Genesis,” Part II, 203. Anderson, 40.

<sup>284</sup> Makdisi, *Faith*, 71.

In contrast to Diyarbekir where Charlotte Ward needed to learn Turkish, in Ras Beirut she found no need for Arabic. As such this linguistic barrier further intensified the self-contained and self-referential nature of the Anglo-American community and precluded close encounters with the locals they lived amongst. In his first years as AUB professor Laurens Seelye presciently noted, “it is possible to live within ourselves and have no opportunity to speak Arabic unless such an opportunity is specially sought.”<sup>285</sup>

### **Intramariage and Interracial Relations**

Perhaps not surprisingly, this living within manifested itself in intracommunity marriage. Intramariage both reinforced homogeneity while it also modeled the community’s modern American way of life. Charlotte Ward wrote enthusiastically of looking forward to “knowing Mary Bliss, [...] she and Mr. Dodge have dedicated their lives to missionary work, especially to work for the Moslem, and are going to start here.”<sup>286</sup>

The Bliss-Dodge marriage of 1914 epitomized the self-perpetuation of Ras Beirut’s Anglo-American community. Here two of the longest-standing SPC families came together in the union of SPC President Howard Bliss’s daughter, Mary, and Cleveland Dodge’s son, Bayard, representing not only the third generation of college leadership and financial backing, but also Anglo-American missionary academic continuity in Ras Beirut. When Bayard Dodge succeeded his father-in-law Howard Bliss as college president in 1923, he also succeeded him in his role as modern missionary. To

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<sup>285</sup> Laurens Hickok Seelye to Family, January 2, 1921, Williams-Chambers-Seelye Papers (in process), ASC, Amherst College.

<sup>286</sup> Charlotte Ward to Family, January 11, 1913, ASC, MHC.

the modern missionary success was no longer measured in terms of saving souls and winning converts to Protestantism, but instead more broadly in terms of a “focus on social transformation through good works.”<sup>287</sup>

Mary Bliss Dodge assumed the full-time responsibility of being the president’s wife. Raised in Beirut, she had a “strong sense of duty” and often her husband had to force her to rest from her “‘Bliss conscience,’ a strict Puritan code instilled in her from childhood.”<sup>288</sup> Products of the age of the American Social Gospel and Progressive Movements, the Dodge couple exemplified self-sacrifice and discipline and lived “in a style that could be afforded by all faculty members even though he came from big money.”<sup>289</sup> For all intents and purposes, the Dodge couple represented missionary royalty.

On a less grandiose scale “epidemic[s] of weddings” periodically occurred between young Anglo-American male instructors, so-called *staffites*, and the single women of the community.<sup>290</sup> Rachel Hall’s father, William Hall, for example, came to Ras Beirut as a staffite in 1896 where he met Harvey Porter’s daughter, recently graduated from Smith College. They married in the U.S. and returned to Ras Beirut

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<sup>287</sup> Alan Richard Sweeten, Review of “The Jiangyin Mission Station: An American Missionary Community in China, 1895-1951, by Lawrence Kessler,” *The Journal of Asian Studies* 57 1 (Feb., 1998): 190-191.

<sup>288</sup> Guthrie, 89.

<sup>289</sup> Philip Du Bois, “Beirut Staffite: Three years teaching and learning as Instructor at American University,” (n.p., 1992), 203, ASC, AUB. Penrose, extracts from Dodge’s inaugural speech, 292.

<sup>290</sup> The numerous babies born and baptized that year, so many (including her sister Dot’s) that she “cannot keep up with them” and “epidemic of weddings,” though never mixed ones, indicates the continued flourishing of the Community. Charlotte Ward to Family, December 21, 1930, ASC, MHC.

where Hall took the position of Principal of the College Preparatory School.<sup>291</sup> Longstanding missionary and author of *Fifty Years in Syria*, Henry Harris Jessup's daughter Ethel Hyde Jessup married SPC doctor Franklin T. Moore in September 1897.<sup>292</sup> Howard Bliss's two other daughters, Alice and Margaret, also married staffites, Byron Smith and Leslie Leavitt respectively. And Charlotte Ward's visiting sister Dorothy Allen met and married Bill West upon his return home to Ras Beirut as a staffite recently graduated from Princeton University. Bill West was the son of Robert West, professor of math and astronomy at the SPC since 1884 (of the West Hall building discussed in the previous chapter).<sup>293</sup> Evidently, staffite romances were so common that around the campus there was a saying that "AUB may not have been a godsend to the Lebanese, but was a mansend to missionary daughters."<sup>294</sup>

By contrast, intermarriage between Anglo-Americans and the local community presented a categorical taboo. The Anglo-American community implicitly sustained the belief held in English colonial circles in the nineteenth century that interracial marriages would "threaten the order of colonial societies because they questioned the assumptions on which social categories were assigned, complicated recognition of national identity, and exposed the fault lines separating the promise of inclusion from the practices of exclusion."<sup>295</sup> However, the discomfiture the Anglo-Americans revealed in

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<sup>291</sup> Hall, 2-3.

<sup>292</sup> Jessup, 642.

<sup>293</sup> Robert West joined the SPC in 1893 and married Mary Alice Crawford, born in Damascus where her father was an American missionary.

<sup>294</sup> Du Bois, 203.

conversations relating to interracial relations bespoke an awareness of the inherent contradiction between the modern missionary image they upheld and the racially segregated reality of their lives. Indeed, the caution exercised in discussing the rare instances of interracial relations revealed the Anglo-American's tacit complicity in maintaining racially clear boundaries. And yet, this mentality corresponded to the views held by western humanitarian workers in the 1920s that "the creation of the 'unnatural' unions with Armenian women and girls [with Muslim Turks was considered] an act of miscegenation that they found both offensive and contrary to the moral discipline of modernity."<sup>296</sup> Their definition of modernity affirmed the state based nationalism of the post-Ottoman era and viewed as natural the separation of peoples into states on the basis of racial and religious homogeneity.<sup>297</sup> While working and living educated, disciplined lives, then, these modern missionary educators of the Anglo-American community of Ras Beirut, considered interracial relations anathema. A few cases of interracial relations gone awry illustrate the persistence of this mentality well into the start of the 1930s.

The first case involved Harry Speller, a former drill sergeant in the British Army, who was hired as the college athletics director in 1919. When he first presented himself, Acting President Edward Nickoley enthusiastically received him. Nickoley wrote to President Howard Bliss, then in the U.S., of Speller's experience in India and how "he is

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<sup>295</sup> Ann Laura Stoler, "Sexual Affronts and Racial Frontiers: European Identities and the Cultural Politics of Exclusion in Colonial Southeast Asia," in *Tensions of Empire: Colonial Cultures in a Bourgeois World*, ed. Frederick Cooper and Ann Laura Stoler (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 198-237 as quoted in Reeves Ellington, 109.

<sup>296</sup> Keith David Watenpaugh, "The League of Nations' Rescue of Armenian Genocide Survivors and the Making of Modern Humanitarianism, 1920-1927," *The American Historical Review*, 115, 5 (December 2010):1326.

<sup>297</sup> Ibid.

therefore not wholly new to the point of view which a man must take of his work here as to that at home.”<sup>298</sup> Nickoley considered Speller’s colonial experience an asset that prepared him well for work among non-Anglo-Americans, implying the implicit shift in attitude necessary to work in non-U.S. settings. But Nickoley warned that Speller’s application was marred by his engagement to an Arab woman. Speller’s fiancé was the sister of Fuad Sarruf, of the Christian Sarruf family, long associated as students and teachers of the SPC.<sup>299</sup>

Nickoley’s initial reservations towards Speller’s engagement became increasingly antagonistic in the next few months. He spoke of Speller as “crude, [who] doesn’t know a ‘h’ (heathen) when he sees it. You know them I mean the men of that class” and that “I am not pleased with the matrimonial alliance which he is contemplating. But there is another reason against keeping him on – chronic malaria.”<sup>300</sup> Thus Nickoley found the excuse to fire Speller in his nonconformist social dealings, and in his disregard for religious, ethnic, or class-based distinctions. Evidently a contradiction between the way interracial relations in Ras Beirut were practiced and the way they were portrayed abroad existed in very real terms. By the end of the month, Nickoley reported to Howard Bliss that it was “generally agreed that we should drop him [Speller] overboard at once [and that] he has been spending the past week at the home of his fiancé’s parents. His

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<sup>298</sup> Edward Nickoley to Howard Bliss, Oct. 30, 1919, Nickoley Papers, ASC, AUB.

<sup>299</sup> Fuad Sarruf, an SPC graduate (class of 1918), was the nephew of Ya‘qub Sarruf, one of the five members of the SPC’s first graduating class in 1870 who was also popular teacher at the college until his contract for adjunct position had been withdrawn in the wake of the infamous Darwin Affair of 1882. Sarruf subsequently moved to Cairo. His nephew, Fuad Sarruf, also an SPC graduate, was an English instructor at the college from 1918 to 1920. Anderson, 47.

<sup>300</sup> Edward Nickoley to Howard Bliss, Jan 3, 1920, Nickoley Papers, ASC, AUB.



prospective father-in-law being your devoted friend Sarruf.<sup>301</sup>” After this, no further mention of Speller surfaced. The Speller case illustrates Nickoley’s estimation of Speller worsening in indirect proportion to Speller’s increasingly close relationship with Sarruf’s daughter. Apparently, Speller did not exercise the expected discrimination his previous colonial experience in India promised.

Another example a few years later involved Albert Dow, a staffite from 1923 to 1925, who announced his engagement to a Christian woman from the northern village of Bishmezzin. Upon informing the college of his marital plans, response came in the form of a swift reprimand that staffites were expected to remain single and live among students on campus. Less than a week later Dow announced the annulment of his engagement and his desire to return to the U.S. at once. He explained his foolishness on account of his “momentary insanity” when he “went to Bishmizzen and drifted recklessly into a sort of intoxication.”<sup>302</sup> Before he knew it, he found himself promising marriage to the father of “an unusually pretty and clever girl [in...] an idyllic sort of place [where...] I simply enjoyed a happy week.”<sup>303</sup> Upon his return to Beirut, he wrote that “either she or her parents are mercenary and calculating” and that he had been “compromised.”<sup>304</sup> Further, he added, “a marriage on a false basis, without real love, or common language, interest and harmony would be a misfortune to us both.”<sup>305</sup> Acting President Day cautioned

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<sup>301</sup> Edward Nickoley to Howard Bliss, Jan. 28, 1920, Nickoley Papers, ASC, AUB.

<sup>302</sup> Albert Dow to Acting President Day, Sunday May 3, 1925 Dow to Day, Monday morning, May 3 (actually 4), 6 a.m. Human Resources, Personnel Files, ASC, AUB.

<sup>303</sup> Dow to Acting President Day, Monday morning, May 3, 1925.

<sup>304</sup> Ibid.

President Dodge with regard to the potential racial ramifications of the Dow affair, confiding that “we need to be careful not to give the impression that we are sending him away to prevent his marrying a Syrian. There is apparently some danger of the matter being considered in that light, and such an idea, if it got abroad would be troublesome.”<sup>306</sup> Indeed, only five years before in 1920, the college faculty voted to remove the discriminating distinctions to which Arab members of the faculty were subjected and erase the “color line” by including them as full voting members of the faculty.<sup>307</sup>

The color line, however, persisted on the social landscape of Ras Beirut, especially in determining the social spheres Anglo-American children grew up in. Writing of her childless Egyptian neighbors in the mountains, Charlotte Ward expressed relief at how fortunate that they “can be entirely separate – which would be hardly possible if such people as had desired the house a few months ago had come in – a Syrian man with an English wife and three small children.”<sup>308</sup> She never volunteered the identity of this family, grateful that her children would not be exposed to them and that she would not have to confront her own misgivings towards interracial mixing. In another example, she writes of rebuking her housekeeper for “stuffing Philip with olives one day and

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<sup>305</sup> Ibid.

<sup>306</sup> Acting President Day to Bayard Dodge, May 9, 1925, Human Resources, Personnel Files, ASC, AUB.

<sup>307</sup> Nickoley to Howard Bliss, April 1, 1920; Nickoley to David Stuart Dodge, Aug. 1, 1920, Nickoley Papers, ASC, AUB

<sup>308</sup> Charlotte Ward to Family, July 8, 1914, ASC, MHC. The Syrian could possibly have been Protestant convert, Nikolas Tabit, married in 1907 to British woman, Agnes Clabdon. They had three children, Zelpha (wife of Lebanese president, Camille Chamoun), Michel, and another son. AUB Alumni Association, Directory of Alumni, (April 1953), 36.

another allowing all three [of her] children to play with a whole troupe of native children.”<sup>309</sup> Charlotte Ward left the local children nameless and faceless, ensuring their irrelevance to the Anglo-American world.

On a more formal level, Arab children were barred from attending the Faculty School, also known as the Community School, even if they were children of the college’s Arab faculty. When Arab professor of history Philip Hitti sought to enroll his daughter there, he apparently caused a great stir with members of the Anglo-American community. The prevailing argument was that childhood friendships had the potential to grow into intimate companionships leading to undesirable interracial complications in the future.<sup>310</sup> In any case, Hitti left AUB in 1926 to take a permanent position at Princeton University. Apparently his wife, an American of Lebanese origin, was unhappy with the “holier than thou” attitude of the women of the community.<sup>311</sup> But the greatest scandal replete with interracial overtones that hit the Anglo-American community of Ras Beirut the year Hitti left in 1926 was the murder of Dr. Arthur Dray, head of AUB’s School of Dentistry.

### **The Dray Affair**

Arthur Ryton Dray joined the college the same year as the Wards in 1911 as Dean of the new Dental Department. In the inauguration of the department, Dray held an informal opening to display his new dental techniques and “used the some of the old gold that Dr. Post brought out here years ago to cast a little brooch for Mrs. Post.”<sup>312</sup> Charlotte

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<sup>309</sup> Charlotte Ward to Family, October 23, 1914, ASC, MHC.

<sup>310</sup> Nickoley to Laurens Seelye, Sept. 14, 1935. Laurens Seelye Papers, ASC, Amherst College.

<sup>311</sup> John R. Starkey, “A Talk With Philip Hitti,” *Saudi Aramco World*, July/August 1971 (Vol. 22, No. 4): 23-31. Quotation in the original.

Ward's earliest letters catch flashes of Dray as "the only unmarried man of the Faculty [and...] the chief entertainer of the evening with stunts and stories."<sup>313</sup> In response to Charlotte's surprise at the unusual number of ladies at the mission's financial meeting, Mrs. March, the wife of the head of the Syria Mission, "laughingly said, 'Oh, Dr. Dray is the great attraction of the ladies now'" (Figure 31).<sup>314</sup> In 1913, thirty-nine-year old Dray married the nineteen-year-old daughter of the Belgian Consul, Gretel Leithe.<sup>315</sup> His house, "the finest location in town," was situated "out on the point commanding [an] extensive view, the whole sweep of sea and shore between Sidon Point and Tripoli Point, our two extreme coast-lines," which gave it a perfect seascape vista.<sup>316</sup> No ordinary house, he rented the second floor of the pink palatial Ardati house built next to the lighthouse overlooking the Mediterranean. Equipped with an "army of servants" in one of Ras Beirut's most noteworthy residences Dray lived what Nickolay described as a "luxurious life" (Figure 32). In the summer of 1917, Dray moved to his mountain house in the town of Brummana where he oversaw a soup kitchen and asked Nickolay to live in his house to ensure that servants and others taken in "do not turn the house upside down."<sup>317</sup>

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<sup>312</sup> Charlotte Ward to Family, June 12, 1911, ASC, MHC. Dr. Post died in 1909, Mrs. Post was his widow.

<sup>313</sup> Charlotte Ward to Family, Jan. 2, 1912, ASC, MHC.

<sup>314</sup> Charlotte Ward to Family, May 27, 1912, ASC, MHC.

<sup>315</sup> L. Banks, "The Anglo-American Cemetery."

<sup>316</sup> Edward Nickoley, *War Diary* (1917), ASC, AUB, 56; Charlotte Ward to Family, Jan. 23, 1912, ASC, MHC.

<sup>317</sup> Nickoley, *War Diary*, July 22, 1917, 54.

Dray's unusually high salary perhaps accounted for his lifestyle. President Howard Bliss agreed with Dray on an annual salary of \$1,500, twenty-five percent higher than the usual salary for unmarried starting professors. When Bliss learned Dray secured a separate agreement with the college Board in New York for a salary of \$2,000, he expressed his misgivings at having to disclose Dray's inflated salary to the faculty considering that only Harvey Porter, whose university service totaled more than twenty-five years, earned a \$2000 salary.<sup>318</sup>

Known for his powers of persuasion, Dray had a "natural gift for making friends with those in high positions of responsibility."<sup>319</sup> So much so that he procured the favor of the Turkish authorities to keep the College fed and open during the First World War. At the start of the War and without prior explanation, Ottoman military governor of Syria Jemal Pasha summoned Dray to Jerusalem to perform an operation on a high-ranking official who had been shot in the jaw.<sup>320</sup> Dray performed the operation successfully saving the patient's life and Jemal Pasha was so relieved that he granted Dray whatever he requested; including permission for the disembarkation of American teachers on a ship in the harbor, exemption of the college's Arab teachers from military conscription, and most importantly ensuring the college a consistent source of food at military prices.<sup>321</sup>

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<sup>318</sup> Howard Bliss to David Stuart Dodge, June 1, 1911, Howard Bliss Collection: AUB President 1902-1920, Box 9, File 1: 1, ASC, AUB. Dray's position illustrates the inconsistencies with regard to the salary question not only between Anglo-American and local hires, but also within the Anglo-American community itself evidencing a much more complex reality, internal hierarchy than that presented by the foreign versus local binary.

<sup>319</sup> AUB Faculty Minutes, 1924-1929, March 23, 1926, ASC, AUB.

<sup>320</sup> This whole event was clouded in secrecy. Some sources report the patient as a German official, others (Margaret McGilvary, see fn323) a member of the Turkish/Ottoman royalty; the shot was supposedly intended for Jemal Pasha but hit his companion instead.

<sup>321</sup> *Al-Kulliyah*, 12, 6 (April, 1926): 156.

Not only was Dray a college hero, but he was also described as a savior to the Syrian people during the War. Margaret McGilvary's book *Dawn of a New Era in Syria* dedicates an entire chapter, "How an Englishman Kept Four Thousand Syrians Alive," to Dray's relief work in the mountain town of Brummana.<sup>322</sup> Dray secured permission from Jemal Pasha to open a soup kitchen there to feed over fifteen-hundred starving women and children a day. Dray's soup kitchen, moreover, became the model for the several other soup kitchens opened under American auspices, including one in Sidon under the Jessups, one in Suk al Gharb under George Scherer, and one in Abeih under Bayard Dodge and the American Relief Work effort.<sup>323</sup> Dray evidently could do no wrong as heroic modern missionary of the Anglo-American community. He performed this role to such perfection that his fall left the community in stunned disbelief.

After the war, Dray's world crumbled. Financial difficulties and his expanded family forced him to move from his grand residence by the sea to the upper floor of the School of Dentistry on the college campus (Figure 33). The addition of an Arab dentist, Habib Rihan, to the dental faculty caused Dray much consternation; Nickoley wrote that "[Dray] does not understand whether the engaging of a Syrian instead of an American is a matter of economy [...] we all know that this matter has become something of an obsession with him."<sup>324</sup> Dray's increasingly unstable behavior took much of Nickoley's time as Acting President. Nickoley wrote of "poor old Dray. He is to be pitied;" he faced "domestic troubles of an accentuated kind," "unsatisfactory financial conditions," and

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<sup>322</sup> Margaret McGilvary, *Dawn of a New Era in Syria* (New York: Fleming H. Revell and Co., 1920) 209-234. I thank Christine Lindner for alerting me to this book.

<sup>323</sup> McGilvary, 232.

<sup>324</sup> Nickoley to Howard Bliss, October 22, 1919, ASC, AUB.

“we all know that he does not know how to manage.”<sup>325</sup> Apparently, one of Nickoley’s “most regular occupations [was] in the adjustments of difficulties and misunderstandings” concerning Dray.<sup>326</sup> In one instance, Dray asked Nickoley to forward an order of a new Ford automobile from the U.S. to be shipped to Beirut while he simultaneously secured the same car from a dealer in Beirut. Nickoley wrote excusing Dray, “the erratic one,” and to cancel the U.S. order “lest he should find himself with two cars on his hands” and questions, “If Dray weren’t Dray, who would he be?”<sup>327</sup> Nickoley’s insinuations regarding Dray’s behavior belie the protective shield Anglo-Americans used to deflect attention from any intercommunity irregularities. For above all, they were preoccupied with maintaining an incorruptible appearance in local eyes. Be that as it may, Nickoley’s frustrations with Dray being “up in the air and down in the deepest dumps alternatively” and of his “eccentricities and shortcomings” ultimately disclose that Dray was “going batty fast.”<sup>328</sup> In 1924, Dray went to the United States on furlough. Within a year of his return he was murdered.

Laurens Seelye, professor of psychology and philosophy, wrote to then-President Dodge, “the news which came through about Dr. Dray was stunning to us all! Of course there is much speculation as to the reasons and the details.”<sup>329</sup> The details of Dray’s

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<sup>325</sup> Nickoley to Howard Bliss, March 3, 1920 and August 15, 1919, respectively, ASC, AUB.

<sup>326</sup> Nickoley to Howard Bliss, March 31, 1920, ASC, AUB

<sup>327</sup> Nickoley to Bayard Dodge, April 2, 1920, ASC, AUB.

<sup>328</sup> Nickoley to Howard Bliss, Oct. 22, 1919; Nickoley to Howard Bliss, March 7, 1920; Nickoley to Bayard Dodge, June 24, 1920; respectively, ASC, AUB.

<sup>329</sup> Laurens Seelye to Bayard Dodge, March 14<sup>th</sup>, 1926, ASC, Amherst College.

murder were, it seemed, clear: On March 4, 1926, Dray's Armenian houseboy, described as "an insane servant," slit Dray's throat in his apartment on campus.<sup>330</sup> The killer then turned himself in to President Dodge. The reasons behind the murder, however, were much less clear. Three letters written by President Dodge and a listing in Beirut's undated Registry of the Anglo-American Cemetery hint at some impropriety. Dodge wrote the first two letters in 1926 directly after the murder and the third in 1936 ten years later.

In the first letter, Dodge wrote describing the submissiveness of the murderer, referred to as the "boy," of turning him into the Police, and how

the case is a peculiarly complicated one as the boy was an Armenian and several other Armenians confessed to strange stories, evidently to put us off the track and to shield the boy. We do not know the truth yet, but feel that our professor was evidently quite innocent of any wrong actions that might have brought on the murder and that he was the victim of a misguided lunatic.<sup>331</sup>

What strange stories other Armenians confessed to and whom these several other Armenians were is alluded to in the second letter to George Stewart, university treasurer.

In this letter, Dodge tells of the immediate aftermath of the murder:

It was something of a shock for me to get out of bed [...] to find a boy dripping with blood, and stating that he had left Dr. Dray dead. It was a still worse shock to see poor Dray covered with blood and lying on the floor. Then Miss Dray was terribly upset and then the Armenian secretary had hysterics [...she] stated that she had been the indirect cause of the murder, as she allowed Dray to use her for immoral purposes and rather than blaming Dray, she blamed herself bitterly. She took in the police entirely and I confess some of the rest of us, although it was hard to think of Dray as false to his wife. Fortunately later evidence has convinced all of Dray's friends that the girl was lying and I hope that the police report will

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<sup>330</sup> Bayard Dodge, "The following statement on the career of Dr. Dray was prepared by President Bayard Dodge. It suggests the manysidedness of the life of the modern missionary," *Near East Colleges*, June 1926, ASC, AUB.

<sup>331</sup> Bayard Dodge to Family, March 7, 1926, AA/2/Bayard Dodge/Personal letters 1921-46, ASC, AUB.



be convincing to the public, as the girl and her friends have spread the report everywhere. Just what their motive is and what the girl had to do with the murder is still a mystery to most of us.<sup>332</sup>

In this letter the possibility that Dray had extramarital relations with his Armenian secretary is presented and then just as quickly dismissed by “later evidence.” The cemetery records describe Dray’s murderer as “the jealous fiancé of Dray’s Armenian female dental assistant, who suspected that Dray was having an affair with her.” In parenthesis this claim is declared “unfounded when she was examined by Dr. William Cruikshank, surgeon at AUB.”<sup>333</sup> One can only imagine what kind of examination entailed ascertaining evidence of the woman’s sexual activity. Left to speculation is the identity of the Armenian woman and why she would incriminate herself by confessing about her sexual promiscuity.

In the local press, the reports on Dray’s murder make no mention of a woman or of an affair at all. Indeed the press corroborates the American version of the murder and portrays Dray as the unequivocal victim of his own kindness. *Al-Ahrar* mentions only that Dray’s Armenian servant killed him while he served Dray his lunch. A montage of three photographs includes a portrait of the Armenian young man, labeled underneath as Aram, a snapshot of Dray’s upper body in cap and gown, and a photograph of the crowded funeral procession accompanying Dray’s coffin, draped with the British flag, outside the walls of the college walking down Bliss Street (Figure 34).<sup>334</sup> *Al-Maarad* emphasizes Dray’s compassion and kindness for his rescue of the Armenian young man

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<sup>332</sup> Bayard Dodge to George Stewart, March 17, 1926, ASC, AUB.

<sup>333</sup> Register, Anglo-American Cemetery Records.

<sup>334</sup> *Al-Ahrar*, March 8, 1926, Microfilm, AUB.

by having him treated at Lebanon's Hospital for the Insane, or the 'Asfuriyyeh, until he became well enough to be "hosted" at Dray's house. The murder is explained on account of the boy's (*fata'*) mental relapse that led to his murder of Dray at breakfast. He then turned himself in and confessed to the crime. The murder was particularly tragic, according to this report, because of Dray's legendary generosity, knowledge, and good deeds (white hands) towards the youth of Lebanon, Syria, and the Arab countries beyond.<sup>335</sup> *Lisan al-Hal* gives the most detailed account of the murder including the full name of the murderer as Aram Agaginian. The similarity in detail to Dodge's letters suggests that this report came out of Dodge's testimony. It reports Dodge in his pajamas sending the murderer to the house of Dr. Crawford to wait for the police, noting the murderer's noticeably strange calm disposition. Dr. Cruickshank accompanied President Dodge to Dray's house and found bloodstains on the stairs and doors along with the murder weapon: a dinner knife. The report notes a shattered picture frame next to Dray's body evincing the struggle before the murder and how Dray's previously injured right hand hindered his defense. The report also states that Dray mentioned ghost sightings on several moonless nights that were later corroborated by his assistants who identified the ghost as the murderer lying in wait. The report concludes by calling for the prosecution equivalent to the crime.<sup>336</sup>

A gap of ten years separates these sources of 1926 from Dodge's third letter to the director of the 'Asfuriyyeh. For the first time, Dodge refers to Dray's killer, though still a "boy," by name: Herant Aginian. Dodge described Aginian as a troubled Armenian

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<sup>335</sup> *Al-Maarad*, March 7, 1926, Microfilm, AUB.

<sup>336</sup> *Lisan al-Hal*, Monday, March 8, 1926.

orphan, with a history of violent seizures who moved from one orphanage to another until he ended up at 'Asfuriyyeh under the care of Dr. Watson-Smith. Apparently, Watson-Smith warned Dray against employing Aginian.<sup>337</sup> Dodge recaps the 1926 events:

The boy was jealous because he was in love with an Armenian girl, who was Dr. Dray's secretary. He pretended to be a ghost to spy. One morning Dr. Dray very unwisely asked the girl to come to his apartment over the Dental School at 6.00 am so that he could give her budget figures, before he went to Brummana. As he had a bad hand and could not work, he wanted to reach Brummana before his wife left to come to the city. When the boy saw Dray with the girl at that early morning hour he had a seizure and killed Dr. Dray. The girl was then placed under suspicion; the boy came to *my house*, dripping blood. He confessed the murder, so as to remove guilt from the girl. At the same time the girl invented a story about immoral practices with Dr. Dray hoping thereby to turn the sympathy of the Police to the boy.<sup>338</sup>

Dodge wrote this letter to ensure Aginian remain interned at the 'Asfuriyyeh where he had just been re-admitted for having "acted queerly." The letter refers to Aginian's imprisonment at Beiteddine since the murder where he harbored intense feelings of revenge wanting "to kill the Armenian Secretary as soon as he was released."<sup>339</sup> Neither why Aginian would desire to kill the secretary ten years later nor how Dodge acquired this information is explained. Apparently, the Armenian secretary and Aginian's brother, Hartoune, were sent out of the country long before.<sup>340</sup> Dodge continues,

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<sup>337</sup> Dodge's daughter, Grace Dodge Guthrie remembers her mother's account of their "'maid who had been in and out of Asfuriyyeh [...] one night she threatened me with a carving knife (she had a complex against people with money). Daddy finally returned at ten pm and he got Aunt Mary Dale (supervisor of the hospital) to send two orderlies for her.' I have tried to picture my poor young mother cowering in a corner waiting for her husband to come home, while the crazy woman raved about the house!" in *Legacy to Lebanon*, 78.

<sup>338</sup> Bayard Dodge to Dr. Miller (Dr. Robert Stewart Miller, Lebanon Hospital for Mental Diseases), Jan. 23, 1936, Personal Department, Box 5, File L, ASC, AUB.

<sup>339</sup> Ibid.

When the murder took place, I sent the boy's brother to Australia, to get him somewhere away from the scandal. I believe the brother has made good and would like to have the boy join him. Please do not bother to send a written reply, but sometime when we see each other, you can let me know, if you think that there is anything I ought to do about the case. I would feel dreadfully, if the boy should ever injure one of the University professors, who was obliged to act on the day of the murder.<sup>341</sup>

This 1936 letter from Dodge is the last mention of Herant Aginian. Charlotte Ward makes no mention of the Dray murder and Laurens Seelye was on furlough in the U.S. at the time. Seelye kept in touch with his former students, one of whom, Hartoune Aginian was Herant Aginian's brother, who lived in Sydney, Australia and ran a "small shop of oriental goods and he is doing well."<sup>342</sup> Nothing more, however, is discovered about Herant's fate, except for vague allusions to his release from the 'Asfuriyyeh as an old man during the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982.<sup>343</sup>

While Dray's murder itself was not the result of a racist cast of mind, its portrayal was. Dray's life and the documents which record it are valuable "not so much for their evidence about the eccentric behavior of the accused as for the light they shed on the life and opinions of those who happened to get involved" in the story.<sup>344</sup> Moreover, the

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<sup>340</sup> Ibid. To Australia, based on a letter Seelye wrote to Hartoune Aginian asking about his new life in Australia; Seelye to Aginian, Feb. 7, 1930. Amherst College Archives.

<sup>341</sup> Unsigned letter to "Dear Dr. Miller, Jan. 23, 1936, Personnel Department Box 5, File L, ASC, AUB.

<sup>342</sup> In a letter to another former student, Paul Slavaykoff, Seelye writes "I have had no news of his brother, who, I suppose, is still in prison here." Laurens Seelye to Paul Slavaykoff, February 7, 1930. ASC, Amherst College.

<sup>343</sup> Mundus: Gateway to missionary collections in the United Kingdom. Lebanon Hospital for Mental and Nervous Disorders; [www.mundus.ac.uk/cats/4/1065.htm](http://www.mundus.ac.uk/cats/4/1065.htm). Dr. Nadim Cortas, interview with author, 2010.

<sup>344</sup> Lawrence Stone, "Revival of the Narrative: Reflections on the New Old History," *Past and Present* 85 (Nov., 1979): 22.

suggestions of impropriety Dray's murder raised exposed Ras Beirut's Anglo-American community to ethical scrutiny. This event unleashed the potential to question the community's integrity and undermined their collective representation of unerring righteousness. In one missionary's words, it was "a matter of principle for us as American missionaries to act as examples."<sup>345</sup> To protect Dray, one of their own, and to desensitize the circumstances surrounding the murder, Dodge kept both Armenians nameless and described them as irrational and unpredictable children who acted in collusion. The emphasis on the boy's insanity and the girl's promiscuity provided the necessary foil to preserve Dray's reputation. Even if Dray had made mistakes, whether by hiring Aginian to work for him or by inviting the secretary to his house at dawn, Dodge cast Dray's mistakes in good faith. Aginian and the Armenian secretary were granted neither the benefit of the doubt, nor voice. The Armenians' anonymity, exile, and confinement rendered them mute. Their voices, their reputations, and their stories were buried under the racialism of the Anglo-American community's moral higher ground.

### **Expanding Cultural Boundaries**

Two months after the murder, Dodge wrote of Dray representing "the manysidedness of the life of the modern missionary."<sup>346</sup> He described Dray "in a class by himself," possessed with the exceptional qualities of supreme professionalism combined with a self-sacrificing sense of duty.<sup>347</sup> The silence following Dray's death and one of the

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<sup>345</sup> Margaret Freidinger Kraushaar, *The Mulberry Juice Dress and Other Tales of Lebanon*, Santa Barbara: Fithian Press, 1996), 34.

<sup>346</sup> Bayard Dodge, "The following statement on the career of Dr. Dray," *Near East Colleges Newsletter*, 7 2 (June 1926), 7.

smallest headstones in the Anglo-American cemetery convey the impact of the shock of the murder on college grounds absorbed by the community. His fall from the heights of heroism during World War One to his bloody death in dubious circumstances eight years later was a sharp one. Though it would be hard to suggest that his murder had a direct impact on mentalities towards interracial mixing, a gradual shift in attitude is discernable in the ensuing years.

The death of Charlotte Ward's child in November 1925, six months before Dray's murder, suspended her letters home for more than a year. Since 1919, the Ward family had lived immediately across the street from the School of Dentistry on the first floor of a two-story building owned by the wealthy Arab Muslim Ayass-Daouk family. By the end of 1926, Charlotte's two eldest children left Ras Beirut to the U.S. for college, prompting the resumption of her letters.

For the first time in over fifteen years Charlotte made frequent mention of the local inhabitants of Ras Beirut. In one particular case, Charlotte described the local wedding celebrations held by her next-door neighbors, the Ayass-Da-uq family. The detail with which she describes her surroundings suggested a decidedly more gracious attitude. She writes of

a wedding reception in Sheik Said's house, next to ours. His daughter, Miriam, is to marry this week Thursday a brother of Kamil Daouk [Charlotte's landlord]. All of the neighbors were there. Some of the jewels and dresses of the guests were gorgeous and some of the clothes of the poorer women quite the reverse, but all were treated alike and one could hardly distinguish between servants and guests, between the Princess of Something and the dress maker or music teacher – all were guests of the family. I had not realized before how very wealthy the family must be. It makes one think of the difference between our way and theirs – our house is every bit as good, but we put far less on our clothes and

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<sup>347</sup> Ibid.

probably much more on entertaining, though we do it often and fairly simply instead of in one grand splurge now and then.<sup>348</sup>

Though her comparing “our way and theirs” still carried tinges of missionary sanctimony, her description of her neighbors is overwhelmingly favorable. The Ayass family was a Sunni Muslim notable family originally from Damascus that settled in Beirut in the early twentieth century. The head of the family, Mohammed Pasha Ayass, built a line of houses on the street leading up to the college for his children who married into the wealthy Beirut merchant family of the Da-‘uqs.<sup>349</sup> Of her visit to the wealthy home of Orthodox Christian Emily Sursock, on the other side of town, Charlotte is almost reverent in admiration:

The house is wonderful, and Sit Emily has had the good taste to keep it truly Arabic, with scarcely a European bit of furnishing though many of the comforts, such as electric lighting. Such rugs and carvings, such Oriental effects in soft colors and lights, I have never seen. In the midst of such wealth to find the ladies simple and sincere was quite unexpected, and yet even the most blasé guests seemed to lose much of their Frenchiness and consequently I enjoyed myself much more than usually at such occasions.<sup>350</sup>

This increased prevalence of local names, albeit elite ones, in her letters may be due to the prominence the Wards attained in Ras Beirut. By the late 1920s they had become long-standing residents there and Edwin was now Dean of the Medical School. Intermixing more with locals and members of the Anglo-American community in the “the social whirl of Ras Beirut” Charlotte Ward visited with “the Knudsons, the

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<sup>348</sup> Charlotte Ward to Family, May 29, 1927, ASC, MHC.

<sup>349</sup> Leila Da‘uq Idriss, interview with author, February 14, 2013.

<sup>350</sup> Charlotte Ward to Family, January 14, 1928, ASC, MHC.

Creightons, the Foxes, all join the newcomers, Browns, Goodales, Halls around Wests and Parrs, Zimmerman, Khuris, Khairallahs, etc.!”<sup>351</sup>

By the early 1930s, mixed marriages, though few, also became more evident. Habib Kurani provides one early example. The son of the college steward at the time of the Howard Bliss presidency, Kurani grew up around the college campus. When his parents died during the First World War, they left him and his eight siblings orphaned. President Howard Bliss ensured the placement of the daughters in boarding schools and enrolled Kurani and his brother at the College Preparatory School where they worked for their tuition. Kurani continued his studies at the college for his BA and MA by 1928 and then President Dodge sponsored his PhD at Columbia University on condition he return to AUB as university registrar. While in New York, Kurani met Olive Esther Thomas, a graduate of the College of William and Mary. Upon his return to Beirut, he proposed marriage to Thomas by correspondence. She accepted and sailed to Beirut, and upon her disembarkation Kurani whisked her off to the garden of President Dodge’s house to be married by a Orthodox Christian priest for Kurani and an Episcopalian pastor for Thomas.<sup>352</sup>

Edward Nickoley in reference to Olive Kurani wrote, “I’m afraid the poor girl is having a home sick time of it. Perhaps a baby will be the best possible remedy [...] *but it is all part of the game.*”<sup>353</sup> What Nickoley meant by the game no doubt alluded to the negotiation of the fine lines between community identities that interracial unions blurred. For the Anglo-American community wrestled with this shift in mentality, with some

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<sup>351</sup> Charlotte Ward to Family, Sept. 16, 1928, ASC, MHC. Her emphasis.

<sup>352</sup> David Kurani, interview with author, April 12, 2012.

<sup>353</sup> Edward Nickoley to Laurens Seelye, March 3, 1934, ASC, Amherst College.



upholding the separatist attitude associated with the older generations of missionaries. Of his own daughter's attendance at a party at the house of two unmarried Anglo-American women, Nickoley wrote, "the company was mixed and, according to reports a thoroughly good time was had by all. [...] Apparently the idea does not go down with such people as the Dormans – they seem to be dead against it." And in reference to Dorman's son-in-law, Nickoley adds "he talks authoritatively of the good old SPC days when under grandfather Bliss this was a real missionary institution."<sup>354</sup> Presumably "real" missionaries did not mix with locals especially in the informality of social circles. Attuned to this shift in community mentality over a short ten years, Nickoley noted in 1935,

What a long distance we have travelled since the time when the Closes and others in the community had a fit about the possibility of being obliged to admit the Hitti child to the Community School, fearing that our children would get wrong ideas on the subject of racial relations. The slogan then was, 'If they play together, first thing you know they will want to marry.' I say what a long ways we have travelled since that time to this when the school is taking on its working force an American woman married to a Moslem.<sup>355</sup>

His reference here is to Miss Margaret Batten who in 1935 married AUB instructor Abdul Rahman Barbir from one of the most prominent Muslim clerical families of Beirut.<sup>356</sup> Though Nickoley lauds the community for having come a long way, the community's reaction to the announcement of the Barbir-Batten engagement still elicited

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<sup>354</sup> Ibid. The Dormans were descendents of the Blisses through the daughter of Daniel Bliss, Mary Bliss Dale.

<sup>355</sup> Edward Nickoley to Laurens Seelye, Sept. 14, 1935, ASC, Amherst College.

<sup>356</sup> The Batten-Barbir marriage was scandalous on all sides. Sadly, Margaret Batten died in childbirth in 1940. Interestingly, in 1947 Abdul Rahman Barbir remarried another American, Marie Simco, who was also a teacher at the Faculty School; Karl Barbir, e-mail message to author, March 3, 2012.

much disapproval. Not only did an Anglo-American woman marry an Arab man, but because Barbir was Muslim the marriage was even more contentious. Nickoley commented in a letter to Laurens Seelye, “I need not tell you what the community are saying. You all have memories as well as imaginations.”<sup>357</sup>

### **The Seelyes**

Where Laurens Seelye stood with regard to interracial relations is suggested implicitly. The son of a college professor of ancient Greek, he grew up in Ohio “in a home where there was not an atom of race prejudice.”<sup>358</sup> He graduated from the same educational institutions as many of his SPC colleagues: Amherst College, Union Theological Seminary, and later Columbia University. Like Howard Bliss, Laurens Seelye was a minister at the Congregational Church in Chatham, New Jersey before his move to Beirut. He left the ministry, however, because he tried “to change the Wednesday night prayer meeting to an evening of teenage discussion. And the fathers at the church came to him and said ‘we pay you to do the talking not for us to do the talking.’”<sup>359</sup> He accepted a teaching position at the SPC at the urging of his wife Kate, whose missionary parents lived in eastern Turkey. In the fall of 1919, Laurens and Kate Seelye arrived in Ras Beirut with their two babies.

To Kate Seelye Ras Beirut was closer to home than the U.S. She was born and raised in Eastern Turkey, the daughter and granddaughter of Anglo-American

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<sup>357</sup> Edward Nickoley to Laurens Seelye, May 1, 1935, ASC, Amherst College.

<sup>358</sup> Laurens Hickok Seelye, “A Philosopher Among the Cults of the Near East,” Part I, *The Christian Leader* (January 2, 1937): 6.

<sup>359</sup> Mary-Averett Seelye, interview with author, May 8, 2010.

missionaries working under the ABCFM since the mid-nineteenth century. She only moved to the U.S. to attend Bryn Mawr College, after which she completed a PhD in the history of religions at Columbia University.<sup>360</sup> To Kate, Laurens gave credit “to accustom me to call them, properly, Moslems instead of Mohammedans.”<sup>361</sup>

From the very beginning of their life in Ras Beirut the Seelyes were sensitized to the polyglot multiconfessional mix of peoples of the college surroundings. Laurens wrote of how “I came to be exceedingly critical of general statements about Turks, Syrians, Americans, or others, for there came to possess me the ineradicable conviction that the realms in which people of every race and religion share are vastly larger than those in which they seem to differ.”<sup>362</sup> His qualification here of the West Hall Brotherhood motto with the addition of “race and religion” no doubt concerned his position as West Hall director succeeding Bayard Dodge who assumed the university presidency in 1923. As director of the student center, Seelye filled a larger than life presence on campus. In the eyes of his students, he was described as “over seven feet tall” and “first as a queer and stately well-dressed slick skeleton, then as an orator or unusual impressiveness and non-ending resourcefulness and finally as a bright chap.”<sup>363</sup> Another student recalled Seelye’s challenge to social norms that emphasized the impropriety of members of the educated class dirtying their hands with manual labor.

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<sup>360</sup> Ibid.

<sup>361</sup> Laurens Hickok Seelye, “A Philosopher Among the Cults of the Near East,” Part II, *The Christian Leader* (January 9, 1937) 40.

<sup>362</sup> Seelye, “Philosopher,” Part I, 6.

<sup>363</sup> George Fawaz, “AUB in the Early Thirties, Its Golden Age; Reminiscences of an alumnus,” *Saab Medical Library*; AUB Libraries, 6. Edward Jurji, “Professor Seelye,” *Student Union Gazette* (AUB: Christmas Issue 1927), 15, AUB, ASC.

When assigned the job of cleaning the toilets of West Hall, Seelye explained the importance of the job to the student and “to my shocked surprise, proceeded to help me with it himself.”<sup>364</sup> Laurens Seelye’s hands-on approach to life and learning left his students impressed with his calls to “think for yourself” and “be original.”<sup>365</sup>

Laurens Seelye boasted of Kate’s nurturing bonds of kinship in her childbearing endeavors. After the birth of their son she nursed an Armenian baby and after the birth of their daughter he wrote that Kate “furnished the drink of life by nursing a little ‘Muhammad’ born ten days earlier; a Syrian and a Moslem at that. While I work away on interreligious and interracial associations in the Brotherhood thus does she experiment in sisterhood.”<sup>366</sup> That the practice of nursing children of different mothers at the same breast signified lifetime ties of milk kinship and lends further credence to the Seelye’s crossing of lines. Critical even of her mother, Kate Seelye commented to her sister that their mother never forgot that her Armenian helper “is not only younger, but of what all the old line missionaries seem to have felt in their instincts, an inferior race.”<sup>367</sup> The Seelye’s attitude put them in a liminal position with regard to the tacit cultural bounds that defined the Anglo-American community. In other words, their elastic worldview allowed them to look *and* touch the landscape.

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<sup>364</sup> Afif I. Tannous, *Village Roots and Beyond; Memoirs* (Beirut, Lebanon: Dar Nelson, 2004), 116.

<sup>365</sup> Edward Jurji, “Profesor Seelye,” *Student Union Gazette* (AUB, Chistmas Issue, 1927), 15-18;

<sup>366</sup> Laurens Seelye to Family, April 4, 1925, ASC, Amherst College.

<sup>367</sup> Kate Chambers Seelye to “Dot Old Dear,” Jan. 18, 1933, Williams-Chambers-Seelye Papers (in process), ASC, Amherst College.

Compared to Rachel Hall (see page 89), for example, Laurens Seelye's evocations of the surrounding physical landscape summoned up images of unity rather than of appropriation. In his recollections of weekend retreats with students of the West Hall Brotherhood, Seelye tied the view of the landscape to the people he viewed it with. The shared vision of

the kind of religion which joins the hearts of men of like high purposes pervaded the group as we hoped and planned for campus and country. When our eyes moved from the summits of the Lebanons on our right to the glorious setting Syrian sun on our left beyond the far horizon of the Mediterranean, we would join with or without words in our 'Brotherhood Prayer.'<sup>368</sup>

To Laurens Seelye, the sun was Syrian not American. Americans could live under it, but had no claim on it.

The Seelyes, especially Laurens, were a bit too unconventional for the Anglo-American community. In 1929, Edward Nickoley wrote to Laurens Seelye on behalf of those "who seem to find it easier to talk about you than to you" to express disappointment with his performance after ten years.<sup>369</sup> Nickoley listed five reasons why Seelye fell short; among them, his "lack of stability," not being "sufficiently considerate of other peoples' views and beliefs – too much blasting of established traditions," and finally of "striving after 'informality' degenerating at times into lack of dignity."<sup>370</sup> In light of Seelye's outlook towards intercommunal relations, Nickoley's harsh words ring true. In retrospect Nickoley's criticism of Seelye's behavior suggests the strength, not the weakness, of Seelye's particular disposition and the parochialism of the modern

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<sup>368</sup> Seelye, "Philosopher," Part II, 40.

<sup>369</sup> Edward Nickoley to Laurens Seelye, September 19, 1929, ASC, Amherst College.

<sup>370</sup> Ibid.

missionaries of the Anglo-American community. Further it illuminates the dissonance within and heterogeneity of the Anglo-American community that represented variegated articulations of American identity.

Perhaps befittingly, the Seelyes lived on the periphery of Ras Beirut's boundaries. While Laurens Seelye vigorously hiked up and down the mountains to his summerhouse as he whistled the tune of *Lord Jeffrey Amherst*, he drove his Chevrolet the several blocks between his home on the eastern end of Hamra Street and the University.<sup>371</sup> Those blocks set the Seelyes apart from the cluster of Anglo-American homes in Ras Beirut. As Charlotte Ward's letter of 1911 illustrates, most Anglo-American homes hugged the perimeter of the university on Bliss Street extending one or two blocks away at most, if not located on the campus itself (Figure 35). The location of the Seelyes' home is still remembered today in Ras Beirut as the last "tame" spot and the first modern house on Hamra Street.<sup>372</sup> In the 1920s Hamra Street was an unpaved mule path lined with cactus hedges, considered dangerous after dark; a far cry from the bustling commercial street it became in the 1950s (Figure 36). One student, Constantine Zurayk noted that the Seelyes invited students every Sunday at four for tea, but as much as the students liked their company, they dreaded the desolate walk afterwards as they often lost their way back to the campus.<sup>373</sup> The Seelye house was not only remarkable for being on the edge of Ras Beirut, but because it sported an elevator that Laurens Seelye installed to lift his paraplegic father-in-law to the second floor, for Kate's elderly missionary parents were

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<sup>371</sup> Kate Seelye to Family, Ain Zhalte, July 8, 1923, ASC, Amherst College. Jurji, 15.

<sup>372</sup> Damlugi, 36; Rebeiz, 47.

<sup>373</sup> Jibra'il Sulayman Jabbur, *Min 'ayyam al-'umar* (Beirut: Jami'a 'asdiqa' al-katib wa-l-kitab, 1991), 63; Constantine Zurayk in Rebeiz, 86.

too frail to withstand the journey back to the U.S.. To the local children, this elevator was a “miracle of miracles” that brought much amusement.<sup>374</sup>

### **Local Appropriation of the Anglo-American Community**

To the local community of Ras Beirut, which included university students, Protestant Arab converts, and the pre-existing Christian-Muslim community, the Anglo-American community formed an integral part of Ras Beirut. Local appropriation of the Anglo-Americans folded them into the place memory of Ras Beirut. The *Student Union Gazette* records “incident[s] of these men as I have heard them from the old people of the neighborhood. They portray the early Americans *not as they really were* but as they appeared to the people of the district.”<sup>375</sup> In local eyes the first generation of “founding fathers” were cantankerous Puritans whose demeanor bespoke an innate cultural superiority.<sup>376</sup> First SPC President Daniel Bliss, described as a “tall and erect figure,” was a familiar sight on the streets of Ras Beirut. When a local neighbor contested Bliss’s delimitation of the road later named Bliss Street running parallel to the upper campus of college, he calmly dismissed the neighbor, saying, “It is true, Abu-Juryus, they have told me that you are a fool.”<sup>377</sup>

Traces of the so-called company of pioneers who settled in Ras Beirut in the 1870s still lie close to the surface. The streets around the university bear their names long

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<sup>374</sup> Damlugi, 36. Once the Seelyes left Ras Beirut in 1934, the Seelye house was sold, demolished and replaced by another Ras Beirut landmark, the Horseshoe Building.

<sup>375</sup> “Anecdotes,” 39-40. My emphasis.

<sup>376</sup> “Anecdotes,” 39.

<sup>377</sup> “Anecdotes,” 40.

after their deaths and the demolition of their houses. Ras Beirut's best-known street, besides Hamra Street, is Bliss Street. Its association today not so much with Daniel and Howard Bliss as with Bliss House, an establishment famous for its fruit cocktail ice cream desserts and endless traffic congestion.<sup>378</sup> Moreover, the location of the long gone houses of the extended Bliss family is remembered by the older generations of Ras Beirut's inhabitants.<sup>379</sup>

George E. Post built his house abutting the College to the east below the Medical Gate in 1871 at the same time as College Hall. The college later bought his house and turned it into Dray's School of Dentistry. Although the house was demolished in 1969, the street on which it stood, extending to the sea, still bears Post's name (Figure 37).<sup>380</sup> Probably the most contentious personality of the Anglo-Americans community, Post had a reputation for arrogance and duplicity that long outlived him. His renowned stinginess ensured his medical services were always remunerated, and if not, one report claimed he reversed his medical treatment. When it came to his Anglo-American colleagues and their families, however, he refused any payment for medical services because "dogs don't bite dogs."<sup>381</sup> One particularly acrimonious portrayal of Post describes him visiting locals every Saturday to freely dispense medicine with the ulterior motive of acquiring more

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<sup>378</sup> A homeless woman's comment in passing was that she chose her spot on that street in a safe part of town because of its name, "Bless," as in "God Bless Us"

<sup>379</sup> Rebeiz. 47. The main Bliss house stood on Abdel Aziz Street and was replaced by the Fontana Stores building; the Dorman house stood at the intersection of Abdel Aziz and Bliss Streets and was replaced by the Blue Building; and the Smith house on Makdisi Street was bought by Habib Kurani's brother.

<sup>380</sup> "Buildings, their Names, Value and History," American University of Beirut, Comptroller's Office of the University, February 16, 1974. Buildings and Grounds Collection, AUB, ASC, 6,

<sup>381</sup> "Anecdotes," 40.



land for the college. When farmers refused his offers to buy, he allegedly told them he would wait until after their death when their son would surely sell to him.<sup>382</sup> Locals immortalized Post as the controlling force behind the college's power and when he died the local saying went "Never say Post is dead...Post went to rule the dead."<sup>383</sup> Though unfavorable, these views of him are countered by a few who remember him in a slightly more favorable light. Philip Safar remembers his grandmother's stories of Post dropping by to check what she was cooking for lunch and answering her questions about immigrating to the U.S. with the advice that you have to work there just as hard.<sup>384</sup>

Down the street from the former location of Post's house is the intersection still called the Graham stop (*mhatat Graham*) where the tram stopped in front of the former location of the house and clinic of Dr. Harris Graham who died in 1922. Like Bliss, the name Graham is probably less known today for the famous SPC doctor who opened his clinic to all than it is for the name of the particular spot that turns up the hill towards Hamra Street marked by the Graham street side bakery. Older generations of Ras Beirut inhabitants though do remember being told of visits to Dr. Graham's clinic. One story concerns a high-ranking Muslim notable who went to the clinic for treatment. When he received a piece of paper with number five written on it, he asked the reason for this number and the receptionist told him it meant that there were four people ahead of him. His accompanying relative wondered with trepidation whether his notable uncle would accept being fifth in line at the doctor's clinic, even though only three people ranked

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<sup>382</sup> Shibarū, *Ayn Mreiseh*, (Beirut: Dar Misbah Al-Fikr, 2000) 200,

<sup>383</sup> "Naguib Mustafa al-Farr," in Rebeiz, 124

<sup>384</sup> Philip Safar, interview with author, September 14, 2012.

above him in religious authority in the whole province of Beirut (wilaya of Beirut).

Before the Anglo-American presence, the idea of waiting in line never existed; one's personal social status always determined priority. As such, the Anglo-American community taught Ras Beirut to wait their turn, underlining the merits of order, equality, and accountability.<sup>385</sup>

To the local community Edward Nickoley, the "Iron Dean," personified a time of benevolent authority.<sup>386</sup> Nickoley's letters describe some of his extramural affairs on the streets of Ras Beirut as he went on the "war path trying to clear out the liquor selling business which had insinuated itself into the vicinity of the College."<sup>387</sup> Stories abound of his catching students breaking curfew as he lay in wait hidden on the inside of the college walls in the middle of the night long after the gates had closed.<sup>388</sup> And when he stood outside of the college walls on Bliss Street in front of the famous Bekh'azi sandwich shop where students gathered for a bite in between classes, "the street would empty just in his presence."<sup>389</sup> The strategic location of his office at the Main Gate of the University meant that he could keep an eye on both sides of the wall. He had windows that opened on to the inside and outside of the campus so no one dared to be late for work or class.<sup>390</sup>

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<sup>385</sup> Munah al-Solh, "On the American University and its Role," *Al-Safir Newspaper*, June 30, 2003, 17.

<sup>386</sup> George Fawaz, "AUB in the Early Thirties," 4. Tannous, *Village*, 140.

<sup>387</sup> Edward F. Nickoley to Howard S. Bliss, Dec. 20, 1919, AA: 2.3: Presidency, ASC, AUB.

<sup>388</sup> Philip Safar.

<sup>389</sup> Philip Safar.

<sup>390</sup> Jabbur, *Min Ayam*, 73.

Recalled by today's older generation of Ras Beirut's longest-standing inhabitants, these bygone days are ruefully contrasted to the present unruliness of the university students.

Allusions to Howard Bliss and Bayard Dodge as pillars of integrity and selflessness also stand out prominently in local memory. Iskandar Girgi Rebeiz wrote of his appreciation of the missionaries of the college in general and of Howard Bliss in particular. He described Bliss as a man of dignity and kindness who took part in "our happiness and our sorrows."<sup>391</sup> Even more prominently, Mary Bliss and Bayard Dodge were "a wonderful example to all around them at all times" and were the most glamorous couple of the Anglo-American community.<sup>392</sup> Mary Bliss Dodge, "a woman of beauty and elegance was always the first to visit mothers with newborn babies, the first to congratulate newlyweds, the first to convey condolences to the bereaved. All human events in and around the campus interested her."<sup>393</sup> Her husband, Bayard Dodge allegedly accepted a token salary of only one dollar a year for the twenty-five years of his presidency.<sup>394</sup> Munir Shama'a who grew up across the street from the university remembers Bayard Dodge personally carrying his shoes out of the university gates across the street to 'Umar Al-Boyagi, or Omar the Shoeshiner. While 'Umar shined his shoes, they conversed in Arabic until the job was finished.<sup>395</sup> Even if this happened only once, it left an indelible impression of the unassuming character of Anglo-Americans in local

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<sup>391</sup> "Iskandar Jirgi Rebeiz," in Rebeiz, 57.

<sup>392</sup> Najwa Shaheen Haffar, *We Once Were Like That: A Memoir* (Beirut, Seattle, Los Angeles, Vienna: Ameer Publishing, 2012), 106.

<sup>393</sup> Wadad Makdisi Cortas, 43.

<sup>394</sup> "Constantine Zurayk," in Rebeiz, 86; Guthrie, *Legacy*, 74.

<sup>395</sup> Shama'a, 110.

eyes. To many, “the Dodges, like the Blisses, were people of integrity.”<sup>396</sup> Indeed as Najwa Shaheen, the daughter of a university professor, explains, “the Americans that were around us as we were growing up were extraordinary persons. They were an inspiration to us all with their selfless dedication to the University, to Lebanon and the Lebanese.”<sup>397</sup>

Arguably local memory not only appreciated the Anglo-American community but also appropriated them to fit their image of Ras Beirut’s exceptionalism. Perhaps the observation that locals remembered Anglo-Americans *not as they really were* has more truth to it than at first glance. They remembered, or rather imagined, the Anglo-Americans as part and parcel of Ras Beirut, as local Ras Beirutis. Appropriating Anglo-American lives gave Ras Beirut a broader significance, standing for its expanded cultural boundaries even as Anglo-American cultural boundaries remained less flexible. From local perspectives, these personalities, presences, and lived lives invested Ras Beirut with multiple layers of place identity spanning not only confessions but also nationalities. Thus the exceptional mix, or the “mosaic,” of Ras Beirut afforded everyone, even Anglo-Americans, a home.<sup>398</sup> While the Anglo-Americans used the dramatic setting of Ras Beirut as a backdrop to stage their purposeful and exemplary lives, locals appropriated the presence of the Anglo-American community as testimony of the exemplary and unique qualities of Ras Beirut.

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<sup>396</sup> Wadad Makdisi Cortas, 42.

<sup>397</sup> Shaheen Haffar, 131.

<sup>398</sup> Khalaf and Kongstad, *Hamra*, 20.

## Conclusion

By the late 1920s Ras Beirut began to see the rapid expansion that characterized its future transformation. Charlotte Ward notes,

Ras Beirut has many houses which have been built in the last two years, soon there will be no quiet corner and few gardens. Houses are going up all around the [American] Community School and it will soon be a serious question as to whether we can do so if we ever want to expand. Out by Aunt Dot's, the Zimmerman house is nearing completion and the Khairallah house is begun, and the Jurdaks have bought the ground in front of the West and Parr property [...] The old factory still sits in its place, but at the east of it two big houses three or four stories high have gone up. And so it goes, till there is scarcely a vacant lot all the way out to the lighthouse.<sup>399</sup>

While the Anglo-Americans made themselves at home “living within themselves” in Ras Beirut as emissaries of liberalism, tolerance, and modernity, they excluded locals from close interpersonal engagement and treated them as if they were the outsiders looking in, instead of the reverse. Comfortably ensconced in Ras Beirut for two, sometimes three, generations, Anglo-Americans held attitudes towards the local community that embraced notions of racial and moral superiority common in American public discourse in the early decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>400</sup> Espousing grand schemes of interreligious, interracial brotherhood, they often patronized their non-Anglo-American colleagues and neighbors. In retrospect, Charlotte Ward's eldest son, Paul Ward, wrote of “the goodness of the Beirut and Lebanon I knew is an unshakable memory. Certainly my happy, irresponsible

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<sup>399</sup> Charlotte Ward to Family, March 21, 1927, ASC, MHC.

<sup>400</sup> Erez Manela, *The Wilsonian Moment: Self Determination and the International Origins of Anticolonial Nationalism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 30.

childhood, when I was preoccupied with being an American boy, had more racist than anti-racist overtones.”<sup>401</sup>

At the same time, while these missionary academics shared common socio-cultural backgrounds, they did not act as one block. According voice to those who went against the grain necessarily complicates the picture, moving beyond the binary that reduces Anglo-American missionary educators to either saints or imperialists. Moreover, it avoids generalizations that do not fit individual cases like the Seelyes. As such, this chapter illuminates the manifold and sometimes conflicting definitions of American in the context of a U.S.-Middle Eastern encounter while also according agency to local voices through their memory of a shared past of transnational significance. On the other side of this cross-cultural encounter, locals asserted their characterizations of the Anglo-American community. While they expressed genuine appreciation to the missionary academic contribution to Ras Beirut, they appropriated that presence to fuel their own narratives of exceptionalism. Their incorporation of Anglo-American names into the streetscape and their use of Anglo-American former homes as spatial points of reference attests to their interpretation of the long-term Anglo-American presence as confirmation of local exceptionalism, particularly in explaining Ras Beirut as the site for the SPC. In looking back on the Anglo-American community, the local community of Ras Beirut insisted on its own exceptional role in the American choice of Ras Beirut. Chapter Five examines this pull of recollection in local narratives of coexistence in more detail, but

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<sup>401</sup> Paul Ward, “Swimming Holes of my Childhood: Swimming at Faculty Cove – a “Never-Never Land of Privilege,” 26 May 1992, Paul Langdon Ward Papers (in process), ASC, Amherst College. From 1965 to 1974, Ward was executive secretary of the American Historical Association.

first Chapter Four turns to the community of the “Protestants of Ras Beirut” whose identity permanently affixed it to place.

## CHAPTER 4

### THE “PROTESTANTS OF RAS BEIRUT”: LOCATING AN ARAB PROTESTANT *HABITUS*.

#### Introduction:

The previous two chapters showed how the building of the SPC/AUB and the settlement of the Anglo-American community of missionaries cum educators around it gave Ras Beirut a distinctly Anglo-American character that made it the “American quarter” to some.<sup>402</sup> This chapter turns to the small Arab Protestant community of Ras Beirut also affiliated with the SPC/AUB who settled there at the turn of the twentieth century. While Ras Beirut's association with being American came directly out of the presence of the SPC/AUB and its Anglo-American community, its association with an educated middle class stemmed from the presence of this Arab Protestant community.<sup>403</sup> Compared to the Anglo-American community, the Protestants of Ras Beirut were a relatively new community. Their personification of the neighborhood through their strong community bonds and place identity reinforced Ras Beirut as a local site of exceptionalism.

This chapter draws its findings largely from oral history interviews and written memoirs. It traces the individual trajectory of six Arab Protestants to Ras Beirut and then examines the network their families created through inter-marriage, neighborhood socialization, child rearing, Sunday school, and private enterprise. The everyday routines of closely-knit community lives, living alongside the Anglo-American community,

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<sup>402</sup> Charlotte Ward to Family, Nov. 14, 1914, ASC, MHC.

<sup>403</sup> “Arab” Protestants of Ottoman Syria, included in the Vilayet of Beirut (1888-1914), until the end of the First World War and the establishment of the French Mandate.



actualized Ras Beirut as what de Certeau calls “a practiced place.”<sup>404</sup> This chapter borrows from the writings of de Certeau, Pierre Bourdieu, and Edward Casey. Through Bourdieu’s application of the term “habitus” as a set of perceptions, behaviors, and actions complemented by de Certeau’s notion of everyday practices in the making of place, this chapter historicizes the Arab Protestant lived experience, which engendered Ras Beirut. Indeed, the reciprocal impact of people on place and place on people through habitus “ties place and self together.”<sup>405</sup> As the site of the SPC/AUB, Ras Beirut offered the local Protestant community a familiar milieu to cultivate family, school, social, and entrepreneurial relations in a practiced, ordered and collective community life.<sup>406</sup>

The Arab Protestant community as a whole was a direct by-product of the Anglo-American missionary effort in the Middle East. Though missionary work in the Middle East yielded few individual conversions to Protestantism compared to India, Korea, and Japan, “historians cannot gauge missionary impact in terms of numbers of official converts” alone.<sup>407</sup> Much to the chagrin of the missionaries, those who did convert often did so because of the “material improvements and employment opportunities” and saw conversion as a “project of self-improvement.”<sup>408</sup> Ordinary villagers and townspeople

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<sup>404</sup> de Certeau, 117.

<sup>405</sup> Edward S. Casey, “Body, Self, and Landscape: A Geophilosophical Inquiry into the Place-World,” in P. Adams, S. Hoelscher, & K. Till, eds. *Textures of Place: Exploring Humanist Geographies* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001), 409.

<sup>406</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, *The Logic of Practice*, trans. Richard Nice (Cambridge, Polity Press, 1990), 61. Hazel Easthope, “A Place Called Home,” *Housing, Theory, and Society* 21 3 (2004): 133.

<sup>407</sup> Sharkey, “American Missionaries,” xx-xiii. Makdisi, *Artillery; 184-186*. Other works focusing on the relationship forged between Anglo-American missionaries and peoples of Ottoman Syria include: Badr, 1992, 2006; Fleischmann 2002, 2006; Kaminsky, 2006; Khater, 2008; Lindner, 2010; Murre-van den Berg, 2005; Samir Khalaf, *Protestant Missionaries in the Levant: Ungodly Puritans, 1820-1960* (New York: Routledge, 2012).

across Ottoman Syria were not passive recipients of missionary rhetoric, but champions of their own transformation, most often through educational opportunity. More often than not, Arab Protestants were the students, facilitators, guides, translators, teachers, and assistant preachers who made missionary work possible in the first place. The effect of the Anglo-American missionary project rippled far beyond individual spiritual conversion.<sup>409</sup> Association with Anglo-American missionary schools, colleges, and presses (for example, and their call for reform in the context of the *Nahda*, or Arab Awakening, of the late nineteenth century) positioned Arab Protestants as cultural interlocutors between the U.S. and the Middle East. Several became intellectual luminaries who played transformative roles in the *Nahda* and the reform of the Arabic language and education and in the formation of literary and scientific societies.<sup>410</sup> In the most far-reaching terms, they represented “the transitional, pivotal generation: from having been integrated subjects of the Ottoman Empire they had become harbingers of the modern age of globalization [...] with all that meant in transitions of culture, clothes, languages, attitudes, and notions of womanhood” that is taken so much for granted.<sup>411</sup>

This chapter on the nucleus of the Arab Protestant community of Ras Beirut contributes

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<sup>408</sup> Robert, Introduction, *Converting Colonialism*, 19. Makdisi, *Faith*, 62.

<sup>409</sup> Sharkey, “American Missionaries,” xx. “If conversion is understood in the broad sense to refer to *significant turns or changes in character or outlook*, then American missionary influences were substantial [...] they influenced the history of everyday life (including such things as how schoolgirls dressed and how ‘modern’ families arranged their households).” . The role of Protestant converts acting as proto-nationalists is examined by Fruma Zachs in “Mikha’il Mishqa – The First Historian of Modern Syria,” *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, 28 1 (2001).

<sup>410</sup> Makdisi gives a concise overview of some of the Arab Protestant luminaries, such as Butrus al-Bustani, As ‘ad and Faris Shidyaq, and Mikha’il Mishqa in *Artillery and Faith*.

<sup>411</sup> Jean Said Makdisi, “Elisabeth Bown Thomson and the Teacher Training College,” *Archaeology and History in the Lebanon*, 22 (August 2005): 85.

to the local side of the encounter with Anglo-American missionaries while it adds another layer to the transnational and interconfessional history of Ras Beirut.

With its establishment in Ras Beirut in the early 1870s, the SPC naturally attracted Arab Protestants in their pursuit of higher education, professional opportunity, and new beginnings. But the SPC's restriction of permanent positions on the faculty to Anglo-Americans until the turn of the century meant that local Arab faculty were latecomers on the Ras Beirut scene (discussed in the context of the Lewis Affair in Chapter One, p.22). As such the gradual convergence and settling of Arab Protestants around the SPC took place in the early decades of the twentieth century. From that time they quickly assumed a distinct identification with Ras Beirut, so much so that by the mid-twentieth century they became known as "the Protestants of Ras Beirut." Caricatured as "an orderly, cohesive, God-fearing group, sparked by the frugal habits of work and accountability and a strong sense of neighborhood," they lived their lives based on the missionary image of a benevolent America, a paradigm of hard work, honesty, and equal opportunity.<sup>412</sup> For the most part they were cultural rather than pious Protestants, who considered belief an individual responsibility towards God and rational thinking and good work the essence of Christianity.<sup>413</sup> Cecil Hourani captures the kernel of cultural Protestantism in his description of his father, Fadlo Hourani, who held

all his life an admiration for those earnest men and women who had left their homes in America to teach in Lebanon, and he had taken from them not a theoretical interest in their Calvinist beliefs so much as a conscious effort to follow their example – sobriety in dress and conduct, avoidance of extravagance and ostentation, help to one's fellow men and good works – these rather than a

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<sup>412</sup> Kongstad and Khalaf, *Hamra*, 109-110.

<sup>413</sup> Sabra "Mustaqbal," 105. Unlike pious Protestants, cultural Protestants were not concerned with proselytization or the measure of success in numbers of souls saved.

serious belief in predestination or the idea of an elected few were the canons of behavior set before us at home and in the church.<sup>414</sup>

Contact with Anglo-American missionaries through education resulted in not only the conversion to Protestantism of these typically Orthodox Christian young men of modest village origins, but even more importantly their exposure to and appropriation of Anglo-American cultural codes of conduct, outlooks, and dispositions.<sup>415</sup> They turned “the missionary intent to dominate and transform” to effect change in their own lives.<sup>416</sup> This internalized experience Bourdieu defines as the “embodied history” of individual habitus that is “the active presence of the past.”<sup>417</sup> With the convergence of these Protestants to Ras Beirut the “collective nature of habitus” ascribed “the place its special character.”<sup>418</sup> The inextricable bond formed between the Arab Protestant presence and Ras Beirut in turn created the specific association of people with place.

### **Protestant Roots and Routes to Ras Beirut**

The following Arab Protestant stories personify the route from Anglo-American mission schools that were the “true ‘rills’ that fed the college ‘river’” and the Protestant

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<sup>414</sup> Cecil Hourani, *An Unfinished Odyssey* (Beirut: Antoine S.A.L., 2012), 6.

<sup>415</sup> Jean Dayeh, Introduction to Jurji Zaydan’s *Yawmiyyat Rihlat Bahriyyah* (Damascus: Fajar Al Nahda Press, 2010), 10.

<sup>416</sup> Jane Hunter, “American Identity and Christian Internationalism; Women’s Mission in Historical Perspective,” in *Competing Kingdoms, Women, Mission, Nation, and the American Protestant Empire, 1812-1960*, eds. Barbara Reeves Ellington, Kathryn Kish Sklar, Connie A. Shemo (Duke University Press, 2010), 21.

<sup>417</sup> Bourdieu, *The Logic*, 56.

<sup>418</sup> David L. Swartz, “The Sociology of Habit: The Perspective of Pierre Bourdieu,” *The Occupational Therapy Journal of Research* 22 Supplement (Winter 2002): 64S. Kamal Salibi, “The Arab Protestant Heritage,” 131.

community of Ras Beirut.<sup>419</sup> Hundreds of mission schools were located throughout the mountains and along the coastal towns and cities (Figure 38). Among them, the following schools were the main conduits to the college and the build up of the Protestants of Ras Beirut. Located in Abeih in the Shuf region of the Lebanon Mountains southeast of Beirut, American missionary Cornelius Van Dyck and Butrus al-Bustani, probably the most renowned Protestant convert, founded the Abeih Seminary for Boys in 1843.<sup>420</sup> In addition to Bustani's National School for Boys, the Abeih Seminary was the SPC's main feeder school until the college opened its own preparatory school in Ras Beirut in 1878.<sup>421</sup> Located in Sidon south of Beirut, the American Evangelical School for Girls was established in 1862.<sup>422</sup> Also the location in 1881 of the American Sidon Mission, a separate school for boys, the Gerard Institute for Boys, offered both academic and technical programs.<sup>423</sup> Located in Tripoli, north of Beirut, the Tripoli Boys School was

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<sup>419</sup> Tibawi, *American Interests*, 285.

<sup>420</sup> Jessup, *Fifty-Three Years*, 107. "The seminary in Abeih was housed in a property owned by the family of Mushreq Haddad" a Protestant family from the Haddad family of Abeih, who "ran a travel business, renting out his carriage to travelers" and whose daughter would marry the first Arab Pastor, Reverend Yusuf Badr. Said Makdisi, *Teta*, 143.

<sup>421</sup> Tibawi, *American Interests*, 163-4. Bustani (1819-1883) founded the National School for Boys (Madrisat al-Wataniyyah) in 1863 in Zukak al-Blat neighborhood of Beirut; Before SPC's founding by three years, Al-Bustani's school was the local impetus for the establishment of the SPC. For the SPC's first three years, al-Bustani's school served as the preparatory department, provided the physical premises, and supplied the first students for the college until a disagreement terminated the relationship between the two institutions. George Sabra, *Truth and Service: A History of the Near East School of Theology* (Beirut: Antoine, 2009), 20-21. The SPC's own preparatory school was established adjacent to campus (later IC), .

<sup>422</sup> Mary Garvin Eddy, "Sarcophagi in the Attic," *Saudi Aramco Magazine* 20 2 (March/April 1969): 30-32.

<sup>423</sup> In 1880 boarding facilities were made possible by Joachim al-Rasy who opened up his home to board four boys in his house.

established in 1854 alongside the Tripoli Girls School in 1856.<sup>424</sup> Founded originally by the Free Church of Scotland in 1874, the Shwayr school in the Metn region of the Lebanon Mountains was deeded to the Presbyterian American mission in 1899.<sup>425</sup> Though there were several schools in Shwayr, the Presbyterian schools “were far better equipped than the priests’ schools” with clocks “that ‘told’ the time,” benches, tables, and an iron stove run by the local teacher.<sup>426</sup>

In each case, academic success at village or town mission school, then secondary school, opened doors to the college at Ras Beirut linking education to community building. All were SPC graduates, all moved to Ras Beirut before the First World War, and all established households in Ras Beirut that lasted at least two generations. These six individuals sketch the formative phase of habitus “as the scene of inculcation, the place of instruction, that embodies ‘the structures constitutive of a particular type of environment.’”<sup>427</sup> As such, these early life histories are pertinent to the outlooks and mentalities that shaped the character of Ras Beirut.

In the order of their age and approximate arrival to Ras Beirut, this section begins with Jabr Dumit, who was the first member of the Ras Beirut Protestant community to

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<sup>424</sup> Jessup, *Fifty-Three Years*, Lists of Mission Schools of Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions in vilayats of Beirut and Damascus 1903, 805.

<sup>425</sup> Ibid, 677. The property included a church, boys’ and girls’ school buildings and a manse. William Carslaw purchased the property and entailed it as a *waqf* (religious foundation) to Mitri Salibi as agent of the Free Church of Scotland. Carslaw kept the management of the property while missionary of the Free Church. George Sabra, *The Badr Story*, (n.p, n.d.) 5. “The Protestant school in Shweir, or ‘Ain al-Qassis, was originally in Suk el-Gharb (1869), but it removed to Shweir in 1874.”

<sup>426</sup> Abraham Mitrie Rihbany, *A Far Journey* (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1914), 61.

<sup>427</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1977): 72.

establish his home in Ras Beirut. The others followed over the next decade and from the three compass points around Beirut: Jabr Dumit and the brothers Jirjis and Anis al-Khoury al-Makdisi came from towns north and east of Tripoli; Bulus Khawli came from the region of the Kura east of Tripoli; Daud Kurban and Mansur Jurdak came from Shwayr a village in the Metn region of Mount Lebanon northeast of Beirut. Moreover Jabr Dumit's wife Heda Salibi came from Bhamdoun in the Shuf Mountains southeast of Beirut and Bulus Khawli's wife, Nessima al-Rasy came from Marjoun farther southeast in the foothills of the Lebanon Mountains. From the north, east, and south, these Arab Protestants converged on Ras Beirut. Though by no means representative of the entire community, these life histories constitute the base of the settled community of the Protestants of Ras Beirut.

### **Jabr Dumit (1858 – 1930, BA 1876)**

The eldest and first Arab Protestant to establish his long-term home in Ras Beirut, Jabr Dumit was born in 1858 or 1959 in Safita, a predominantly Orthodox Christian town, in present-day Syria northeast of the coastal city of Tripoli. Dumit's father died shortly after his birth and his mother, who never remarried, raised him an only child. Butrus al-Bustani singled out the young Dumit while visiting his school and assured Dumit's mother of her son's future success if she entrusted her son to him.<sup>428</sup> Dumit matriculated at the Abeih Seminary and then moved to Ras Beirut to continue his higher

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<sup>428</sup>Samir Shehadeh, interview with author, March 3, 2012. Usually Anglo-American missionaries conducted supervisory visits to mission schools, often to secure the brightest students for further education. Indeed, accounts of being singled out for academic promise figure prominently in Protestant convert narratives. In one example, Abraham Mitrie Rihbany writes of being a young boy in the mission school of the Shwayr when the English missionary came to inspect the school and chose him because he was a "bright boy." In *A Far Journey* (1914, by Atlantic Monthly Company), 68.

education at the SPC.<sup>429</sup> He earned his BA in 1876, one of five graduates of the School of Arts and Sciences.<sup>430</sup> He then moved to teach at the American missionary school in the town of Homs also in present day Syria.<sup>431</sup> Dumit's education and promise made him part of the growing network of "native" teachers who circulated between mission schools, the most successful ones selected to teach at the SPC's Preparatory School in Ras Beirut.

The exact year Dumit returned to Ras Beirut to start teaching at the SPC is uncertain. According to his grandson, he began in 1878, whereas the college's faculty directory lists him as instructor in the SPC's Preparatory School in 1889. Perhaps his translation work for British General Garnet Joseph Wolseley of the British expeditionary force to Sudan in 1884-1885 interrupted his teaching for a while.<sup>432</sup> Jabr Dumit's translation colleague and close college friend was the famous writer Jurji Zaydan (1861 – 1914) from Beirut, also a renowned intellectual of the Arab *Nahda* who worked as a journalist, publisher, novelist, linguist, and historian in Cairo. Zaydan noted in his diary of 1886 that he travelled with Dumit to London leaving from Beirut in 1886 for several months.<sup>433</sup> Whereas Zaydan settled in Cairo, Dumit returned to Beirut where one can

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<sup>429</sup> Shehadeh interview. That Dumit did attend school there is confirmed in a letter he wrote in 1870 to "May Ziade asking her to write for *al-Mar'a al Jadida*, Jabr Dumit begins his letter to May by explaining that he was at school with Jiryis Tohme (father of Julia Tohme) in Abeih in 1870." Hala Ramez Dimechkie, *Julia Tu'mi Dimashqiyyi and Al-Mar'a al-Jadida 1883-1954*. (MA Thesis: American University of Beirut, 1998), 17.

<sup>430</sup> The Alumni Association of the American University of Beirut, *Directory of Alumni*, 4<sup>th</sup> edition, June 1967.

<sup>431</sup> Reverend Yusuf Badr was pastor of Mission church there for 18 years from 1872-1890, Said Makdisi, *Teta*, 149.

<sup>432</sup> Ussama Makdisi, *Faith*, 75.

<sup>433</sup> Jurji Zaydan, *Yawmiyyat Rihlah Bahriyyah [Diary of a Sea Voyage]* (Damascus: Fajr al-Nahda, 2010), 10-11. Not published until 2010, though written in 1886. Jabr Dumit's granddaughter Heda Naguib Dumit married Jurji Zaydan's grandson, George Shukri Zaydan and



safely assume he resumed teaching at SPC's Prep School. Dumit signed a contract with the SPC in 1895, as the first Arab adjunct professor. In 1909 he became the first Arab full professor in the Arabic Department.<sup>434</sup> The college's race-based policies, however, still prevented Dumit, as an Arab, from full participation on the faculty as a voting member until 1920.<sup>435</sup>

In 1893, Dumit married Heda Salibi, the daughter of Mitri Salibi, a Protestant pastor, from Bhamdoun, a town close to Abeih in the Lebanese Mountains of the Shuf. Mitri Salibi lived and worked in the village of Shwayr, where he co-founded the school with William Carslaw in 1874.<sup>436</sup> Heda had five brothers who graduated from the SPC (between 1888-1908) who may have been Dumit's students. Dumit was known to open his home to his students, perhaps putting him in touch with the Salibi brothers leading to an introduction to Heda.<sup>437</sup> Dumit and Heda Salibi settled in Ras Beirut and had three boys and three girls and thus functioned as the first family of the settled community of Ras Beirut Protestants.

### **Daud Kurban (1860 – 1935, BA 1882)**

Daud Kurban was born in Marjoun to the far south of Beirut, but his family came from the aforementioned village of Shwayr. Shwayr, a predominantly Orthodox Christian village, was known for its impregnability as a high mountain fortress and the

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it was at their house that Naguib Dumit discovered Zaydan's London diary. Thanks to Elizabeth Holt for bringing this book to my attention.

<sup>434</sup> Tibawi, "Genesis," part II, 203.

<sup>435</sup> Penrose, 70.

<sup>436</sup> Jessup, *Fifty-Three Years*, 677.

<sup>437</sup> Shehadeh interview.

skill of its stonemasons who worked throughout the Ottoman Empire.<sup>438</sup> Daud Kurban's father, Ayub Kurban, was a stonemason. According to a contemporary account, "the large majority of the men of El-Shweir (sic) were absent from their homes from spring until late autumn. As a rule they left their home town right after the Easter festival, and scattered all over Syria in pursuit of their trade as stonemasons [...] the men returned to town to spend the winter at home in complete idleness."<sup>439</sup> The fame of Shwayr's stonemasons put them in touch with the missionaries who built churches in the towns of Safita, Bhamdoun, Abeih, and Marjyoun.<sup>440</sup>

Kurban's father had married a woman from Marjyoun and settled there for several years. They had three sons, Daud the eldest, and one daughter. Daud attended the village school in Marjyoun and afterwards moved to the Abeih Seminary, where, like Dumit, he completed his secondary education. From Abeih he entered the SPC and graduated in 1882, one of four graduates of the School of Arts and Sciences that year.<sup>441</sup> After graduation, Kurban became a schoolteacher, like Dumit, in the network of American mission schools. He taught first in Hasbaya in the Biqa' Valley and then moved to Sidon to teach at the School for Girls. Kurban received a teaching diploma from the Sidon Station and in 1889 he married Farida Elias Zeka. In 1902, SPC president Daniel Bliss invited Kurban to join the college to teach Arabic in the newly established School of

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<sup>438</sup> Rihbany, 31. Of his ancestor, Yusuf Badr, George Sabra writes, "It is certain that Yusef, like many of the inhabitants of Schweir (sic), was a mason, who had met the American missionaries while engaged in building in Abeih or the neighbouring areas," *Badr*, 8.

<sup>439</sup> Rihbany, 41.

<sup>440</sup> Sabra, *Badr*, fn 38.

<sup>441</sup> It was at his graduation ceremony that Edwin Lewis gave his infamous speech that sparked the controversial Darwin Affair.

Commerce.<sup>442</sup> He then advanced through the ranks, in 1905 as adjunct professor of Arabic, in 1911 full professor.<sup>443</sup> The Kurbans settled in Ras Beirut and had five boys and four girls.

### **Jirjis al-Khuri al-Makdisi (1868 – 1941, BA 1888)**

In 1937 Jirjis al-Khuri al-Makdisi (Makdisi from here on) wrote “notes” on the history of his family in 1937.<sup>444</sup> He was born in 1868 in Tripoli to Elias al-Khoury al-Makdisi and Mariam al-Khoury el-Beyrouiti. His mother was the first in the family to convert to Protestantism and his father was the son of a Greek Orthodox priest who did not convert until 1885.<sup>445</sup> Jirjis grew up in the village of Amar al-Hosn until his father incurred heavy debt forcing him to sell property and move the family back to Tripoli.

Jirjis’s formal education began in 1879-80 at the American Boys School in Tripoli under a local teacher, Ibrahim Moussa. The teacher directed the attention of the visiting American missionary, Samuel Jessup, to Jirjis. Jessup recorded Jirjis’s name in his “book” and later sponsored Jirjis’s entry into the Preparatory School of the SPC by partially funding his tuition. Jirjis covered the other part with menial jobs on campus such as cleaning rocks for building terraces and planting trees (including the nine trees planted in front of the President’s house).<sup>446</sup> Jirjis wrote of his pleasure in learning under the Faris

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<sup>442</sup> Nessim Helou (former director of Evangelical School in Sidon), *Muthakarat al-Muallem Nessim Helou*, 1868-1951, 305.

<sup>443</sup> Penrose, 121-123.

<sup>444</sup> Jirjis Elias El-Khoury El-Makdisi, *Notes on the history of the Makdisi Family; some heard from his father, some he witnessed himself*, translated by Sami Cortas and Marianna Khuri Makdisi Abdelnour (n.p., 1937).

<sup>445</sup> Said Makdisi, *Teta*, 145-46.

<sup>446</sup> El-Khoury El-Makdisi, 12.

Nimr and Yaqub Sarruf, who used his translated version of “*Sirr an-Najah*” (Secrets of Success) to inculcate purposefulness in his students.<sup>447</sup> Two years later Jirjis reluctantly returned home to teach at a village school to contribute to his family’s income. Frederick March, head of the American mission in Tripoli, sided with Jirjis’ father who wanted him stay home and help with the family whereas Jirjis desperately wanted to continue his higher education at the SPC.<sup>448</sup> Jirjis defied March’s order to teach at a village school and returned to Ras Beirut. March threatened him with college expulsion, but Jirjis managed to convince March that he would find the means to pay his own tuition. How March agreed is not clear but when Daniel Bliss, SPC President, saw March’s letter approving Jirjis’s return to college, he congratulated Jirjis on his victory in defeating March. Jirjis, thrilled that Bliss’s noted his absence from school, wrote of being “very happy and proud that this great man had asked about me.” Bliss took out half of Jirjis’s tuition from the college budget while Jirjis covered the other half by teaching Arabic to the president of the college’s Preparatory School.<sup>449</sup> Until 1888, when he received his BA from the SPC, Jirjis went back and forth between Tripoli and Ras Beirut, between family duty and personal ambition. Upon graduation, March congratulated him on his “perseverance” and Jirjis forgave him for doing his “job as a missionary who need to be obeyed.”<sup>450</sup>

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<sup>447</sup> Ibid, 11.

<sup>448</sup> Ibid, 14.

<sup>449</sup> El-Khoury El-Makdisi, 16.

<sup>450</sup> Ibid.

After his BA, Jirjis taught at the American Girls School of Tripoli where he met Marianna Khawli (1882-1962), sister of Bulus Khawli, whom he married in 1900.<sup>451</sup> Jirjis Makdisi accepted Jabr Dumit's invitation to teach Arabic at the SPC, where his youngest brother Anis Makdisi was studying, and Jirjis and Marianna moved permanently to Ras Beirut in 1905.<sup>452</sup> As an instructor, Jirjis barely made enough to support his family; "he has been obliged to eke out by doing other things, editorial work, preaching," but in 1920 he was promoted to adjunct professor.<sup>453</sup>

### **Bulus Khawli (1876 – 1948, BA 1897, MA 1905)**

Little record exists of Bulus Khawli's life before his association with the SPC. He was born in Bterram, in the Kura region, east of Tripoli in 1876 where he attended the village school. Then he moved to nearby Tripoli presumably to the same American School that the Makdisis attended.<sup>454</sup> At the age of seventeen, Khawli travelled north to teach at the village school in Baino, in the northern region of Akkar, which was one of the largest Christian towns in the district of Akkar with a population of about fifty thousand.<sup>455</sup> He lived with two unspecified American missionaries and he became a Protestant.<sup>456</sup> One of six sons, Bulus was the only one educated and the only one who

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<sup>451</sup> Damlugi, *Awraq*, 45.

<sup>452</sup> Shehadeh interview. He was a member of the Collegiate Department teaching Arabic at the start of WWI, Dodge, 28.

<sup>453</sup> Nickoley to D. Stuart Dodge, May 13, 1920, ASC, AUB.

<sup>454</sup> Sumaya Khawli Nawfal, interview with author, March 1, 2012.

<sup>455</sup> *The Missionary Herald; Reports from Ottoman Syria 1819-1870*, vol. 4, Kamal Salibi and Yusuf Khoury, eds (Amman: Royal Institute of Interfaith Studies, 1995), 62.

<sup>456</sup> Fadlo Khawli, interview with author, January 26, 2011.

remained in Syria. Left in charge of his sisters, Bulus ensured their education at the American Girls School of Tripoli where Jirjis Makdisi taught.

At some point Khawli made his way to the SPC. In 1897 at his graduation he gave the valedictorian speech and immediately accepted Jabr Dumit's offer to teach Arabic at the Preparatory School. In 1904, he travelled to New York where he earned an MA in Education at Columbia University. In 1905 he was appointed adjunct professor of Education and established the SPC's Department of Education. In 1909 Bulus married Nessima al-Rasy, daughter of Yuakim al-Rasy, a preacher and teacher at the American Sidon School for Boys. Bulus and Nessima were married at the same Evangelical Church of Sidon.<sup>457</sup> The Khawlis bought land in Ras Beirut abutting SPC property and built a house there surrounded by a garden where they raised four boys and one girl. In 1910-11 Khawli was appointed full professor and held that position until he became Dean of Arts and Sciences in 1948, the year he died.

#### **Mansur Jurdak (1881-1964, BA 1901, MA 1907)**

Born in 1881, Mansur Jurdak like Daud Kurban came from Shwayr in Mount Lebanon and attended the American school there. Jurdak's father was the village baker and a member of the Jurdak clan, one of the Shwayr's two rival clans.<sup>458</sup> According to Jurdak's grandson, the pastor of the church in Shwayr, Mitri Salibi, converted Jurdak to Protestantism.<sup>459</sup> In 1896, Jurdak won a scholarship funded by American missionaries and moved to Ras Beirut to study at the SPC.<sup>460</sup> Like Khawli, Jurdak also gave the

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<sup>457</sup> Khawli Naufal interview.

<sup>458</sup> Rihbany, 37.

<sup>459</sup> Philip Khoury, e-mail message to author, April 4, 2012.

valedictorian speech at his graduation 1901. He immediately accepted a teaching position at the Preparatory School and in 1904 he began teaching at the College as assistant to Robert West in Mathematics and Astronomy. In 1907 he received an MA from the SPC and became Chairman of the Mathematics Department in 1911. That same year, along with Kurban and Khawli, Jurdak became a full, but non-voting Professor of Mathematics.<sup>461</sup> During World War I until 1919 he took charge of the Department of Astronomy and the Observatory. During that time he discovered the new star Aquila in Herculis. From 1921 to 1942 he was Chairman of the Engineering Department.<sup>462</sup> Jurdak was the first Arab professor not associated with the Arabic Department.

In the meantime, Jurdak had married Leah Abs from an Orthodox Christian family of Beirut. Her father owned the famous Abs stone quarry near Ramlet el Baida, or White Sands, south of Ras Beirut. In 1927 Jurdak bought land on Sadat Street from the Druze Talhouk family and built a six-story building with six apartments to ensure each of his children would have a house. The Jurdaks had six children, two boys and four girls, all graduates of the SPC/AUB.<sup>463</sup>

### **Anis Makdisi (1885 – 1977, BA 1906, MA 1908)**

Anis Makdisi incorporated much of his brother Jirjis's family notes in writing his memoirs. Anis was the youngest son of Elias and Mariam Makdisi and younger than Jirjis by eighteen years. Anis idolized the role of his mother, Mariam, who learned to read

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<sup>460</sup> Ibid.

<sup>461</sup> Penrose, 123.

<sup>462</sup> Mansur Jurdak, *AUBites* files, ASC, AUB.

<sup>463</sup> Angela Jurdak Khoury, interview with author, May 2010. Charlotte Ward to Family, March 21, 1927, ASC MHC.

at the age of forty and taught others how to read using the Bible. Like his brother, Anis attended the Tripoli Boys School. Two other brothers, Azar and Naguib, quit school at the elementary level because of tough economic circumstances and then immigrated to the U.S. in 1904; two of his elder sisters, Esther and Aminah, attended the American Girls School of Tripoli in 1906.<sup>464</sup>

Anis was a good student and the missionaries singled him out to continue his education at the American mission school at Suq-al-Gharb, a three-day journey from Tripoli. He spent one year as a boarder and then moved to the American School for Boys in Sidon, where Kurban taught and where Bulus Khawli's father-in-law, Yuakim al-Racy, worked. Two years later in 1902, he moved to the SPC's Preparatory School. Though the American Mission covered his fees and tuition, he wrote of how his personal needs such as more expensive clothing taxed his father's modest income. Anis graduated from the SPC in 1906 and taught at the Preparatory School for a few years. In 1908 he earned his MA from the SPC and in 1911 was invited to Egypt to organize the Arabic Department of Assiut College, a prominent primary and secondary school run by the American mission in Egypt since 1865.<sup>465</sup> After one year at Assiut Anis Makdisi was invited back to the SPC to take charge of its Arabic Department.<sup>466</sup> He started at the SPC in the Arabic Department as an adjunct in 1916, advanced to an associate in 1921, and to full professor

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<sup>464</sup> Anis el-Khoury el-Makdisi, *Ma'a al-zaman: hayat 'shtuha wathikrayat usajilaha li-awladi khasa li-men yahumahu aw yufidahum al-itala' 'alayha* (Beirut: n.p., n.d), 86. Emigration was probably a much greater pull; ending up in Ras Beirut was not always a foregone conclusion for Syrian Protestants. Indeed in the late nineteenth, early twentieth centuries, a much larger proportion of Syrian Christians, especially Protestants left the Ottoman Empire and immigrated to the U.S. Edward Nickoley, *War Diary 1917*, ASC, AUB.

<sup>465</sup> Sharkey, *American Evangelicals*, 92.

<sup>466</sup> Anis el-Khoury el-Makdisi, "I am Happy and Proud," *Al-Kulliyah* (Winter-Spring, 1975): 19.



in 1925; he served as chairman of the Department until 1950.<sup>467</sup> In 1920 Anis Makdisi married Selma Khoury (1887-1960), daughter of Khalil Khoury, Protestant of Beirut, and they had four children, two girls and two boys.<sup>468</sup>

### **Family Ties and Domiciles**

Jabr Dumit, the earliest to settle in Ras Beirut, played a pivotal role in bringing fellow Arab Protestants there. First he appointed Bulus Khawli to teach Arabic at the college in the late 1890s, then he recruited Jirjis Makdisi from Tripoli to teach Arabic at the SPC in 1905, and then he hired newly graduated Anis Makdisi as his assistant teacher in 1906.<sup>469</sup> Through his father-in-law, Mitri Salibi, Dumit surely knew the mission school in Shwayr from which Daud Kurban and Mansur Jurdak graduated and made their ways to the SPC. With a house full of students, friends, family, and “important” people, Jabr Dumit acted as a foundational figure in the buildup of the Ras Beirut Protestant community.<sup>470</sup>

If Dumit’s role was pivotal, the intermarriage between the Makdisi and the Khawli families decisively extended the base of Ras Beirut’s Protestant community. Parallel to the Anglo-American community, intermarriage among the Protestants of Ras Beirut fused “the singularity of social trajectories” into a web overlapping relations that

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<sup>467</sup> Dodge, 29. Penrose, 202.

<sup>468</sup> Nickoley to Howard Bliss, undated letter 1920, wrote of them as “a nice Protestant family,” ASC, AUB.

<sup>469</sup> Shehadeh interview. Anis el-Khuri el-Makdisi, 87.

<sup>470</sup> Wadad Makdisi Cortas, *A World I Loved*.

defined the community's core.<sup>471</sup> This network created a veritable "architecture of community" in Ras Beirut, and defined it as the place where the collective habitus of Arab Protestantism fastened itself.<sup>472</sup>

In 1900, Marianna Khawli, the eldest of Bulus Khawli's sisters, married Jirjis Makdisi. This first marriage tied the Khawli to the Makdisi family and formed the base of the Ras Beirut Protestant community. Jirjis and Marianna met at the Tripoli Girls' School where Jirjis taught and Marianna studied.<sup>473</sup> They married in Tripoli and had their first three children, Sumaya, Selma, and Elias there. When Jirjis signed on to be a teacher at the SPC, they moved to Ras Beirut where they had two more children, Baheej and Wadad.<sup>474</sup> The marriages of three of their five children connected the Makdisi-Khawli family to several key Arab Protestant families that made their way to Ras Beirut in the next generation (Figure 39). The first marriage was the eldest daughter's, Sumaya Makdisi to Benjamin Baroody, the son of Tanous Baroody and Mariam Maalouf from the town of Aley in the Shuf. Mariam Maalouf had grown up in the mountain house of George E. Post (discussed in Chapter 2); the Posts insisted Mariam name her son Benjamin, a rather unusual name for an Arab.<sup>475</sup> Benjamin Baroody, also a graduate of the SPC, and Sumaya established their household near her parents' in Ras Beirut. The

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<sup>471</sup> Bourdieu, *The Logic*, 60.

<sup>472</sup> Ronald Grigor Suny and Geoff Eley, "Introduction," *Becoming National: A Reader*, eds. Geoff Eley and Ronald Grigor Suny (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 10. Also cited in Keith David Watenpaugh, *Being Modern in the Middle East: Revolution, Nationalism, Colonialism, and the Arab Middle Class* (Princeton University, 2006), 29.

<sup>473</sup> El-Khoury el-Makdisi, 26; Fadlo Khawli interview.

<sup>474</sup> Shehadeh interview.

<sup>475</sup> Mona Baroody Damlugi, interview with author, December 3, 2010.

second marriage was that of the eldest son's, Elias Makdisi to Wadia Hourani. Wadia was the daughter of Fadlo Hourani and Sumaya al-Rasy who were based in Manchester, England. Wadia and Elias Makdisi settled in Ras Beirut. The third marriage was between the youngest Makdisi daughter Wadad to Emile Cortas, of a family of Arab Quakers from the town of Brummana near Shwayr. The Cortases also settled in Ras Beirut where both Wadad and Emile assumed key roles in the Ras Beirut Protestant community. The Makdisi-Khawli marriage connected the network of Ras Beirut Protestants to each other across several families and down future generations. In the third generation, Mariam Cortas, the daughter of Wadad Makdisi and Emile Cortas, married Edward Said; a few years before Edward's sister Jean Said had married Samir Makdisi, the son of Anis. In the fourth generation, their children were both first cousins on the Said side and second cousins on the Makdisi side (Figure 40).

In 1909, almost ten years after the marriage of Jirjis Makdisi and Marianna Khawli, Marianna's brother, Bulus Khawli married Nessima al-Rasy at the Evangelical Church in Sidon. Nessima was the daughter of Yuakim al-Rasy, Protestant Pastor from Marjyoun in southern Lebanon, who taught at the American School for Girls in Sidon. Nessima was also the sister of Sumaya al-Rasy Hourani, whose daughter Wadia, would later marry Elias Makdisi, the son of Jiryus and Marianna.<sup>476</sup>

Bulus and Nessima's daughter described her parents' meeting in terms that would fit a Victorian romance novel. Bulus Khawli, much older than Nessima, had just returned from Columbia University with a newly minted MA in Education to head the SPC's Department of Education. Nessima's brother invited Bulus to visit the school in Sidon.

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<sup>476</sup> Wadia was the niece of Nessima through her mother Sumaya and Elias was the nephew of Bulus through his mother Marianna.

Touring the school, Bulus entered a classroom where Nessima, one of the students, demonstrated a lesson at the board in front of the class. Known for her beauty, Nessima immediately won Bulus's heart and he decided to wait until she turned eighteen years old to marry her. Three years later, Bulus married Nessima at the Evangelical Church of Sidon.<sup>477</sup> On her wedding day, with her hair swept up in a topknot, she wore a high neck white-laced late-Victorian dress like her sister, Sumaya al-Rasy, did when she married Faldo Hourani around the same time.<sup>478</sup> The Khawlis settled in Ras Beirut not far from the Makdisis and had five children: Raja, Bahjat, Kamal, Sumaya, and Fadlo

These two Khawli marriages, Marianna's to Jirjis Makdisi in 1900 and Bulus's to Nessima al-Rasy in 1909, consolidated the Ras Beirut Protestant community. Even a cursory glance at a list of Ras Beirut Protestant family names shows that more than half of them, including Khawli, Makdisi, al-Rasy, Baroody, Nassif, Khuri, and Cortas, extend from these two Khawli marriages.<sup>479</sup> Unlike the children of the 1900 marriage, the children of the 1909 marriage did not marry Protestants, though Bulus and Nessima's youngest son, Fadlo, married the daughter of SPC professor, Nicola Shaheen. Shaheen was Orthodox Christian on paper, but a Protestant in practice.<sup>480</sup> Besides Sumaya al-Rasy Hourani, Nessima's other sister, Khazma, also married a Protestant, Iskandar Nassif, who was an SPC dental graduate. Except for Fadlo Hourani and Sumaya al-Rasy who lived in

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<sup>477</sup> Khawli Nawfal interview. Kamal Salibi noted that Bulus Khawli married the most beautiful of the beautiful el-Rasy sisters, interview with author, November 17, 2010

<sup>478</sup> Celil Hourani, 11, 93.

<sup>479</sup> Kongstad and Khalaf, *Hamra*, 109; Khalaf, "Iyllic Twinship," 14.

<sup>480</sup> Shaheen took his family to worship at the Protestant Church and sometimes conducted the church service in the town of Suq al-Gharb when the pastor fell ill. Shaheen Haffar, 41-2.

Manchester, England, all of these families lived in close proximity to each other in the heart of Ras Beirut.

Though not all related to each other these Arab Protestants brought similar Anglo-American missionary school backgrounds to their lived experiences in Ras Beirut. Their outlooks were “more harmonized than [they] know or wish because following [their] own laws each nonetheless agree[d] with the other.”<sup>481</sup> They set up their houses in a tight cluster. In fact, the location of the Khawli, Makdisi, Baroody, Cortas, Nassif, Dumit, Kurban, and Jurdak households can be seen by way of a simplified map of Ras Beirut’s main streets. Running east to west are Bliss Street, Makdisi Street, and Hamra Street, and north to south are Abdel Aziz Street, Jeanne D’Arc Street, and Sadat Street. The Makdisis, the Baroodys, and the Cortases lived within a stone’s throw of each other lined up on either side of Jeanne D’Arc Street at the intersection with Makdisi Street. Mansur and Leah Jurdak lived to the west of the Makdisis on Sadat Street one block south of Bliss Street. The Nassifs lived on the western end of Bliss Street, Jabr and Heda Dumit lived south of the Jurdaks on Sadat Street at the intersection with Hamra Street. The Khawlis lived to the east, near the intersection of Abdul Aziz and Makdisi Street and the Kurbans a bit to the west of them.<sup>482</sup> Their inhabitation of Ras Beirut reinforced, if not sealed, the link between habitus and place identity (Figure 41).<sup>483</sup>

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<sup>481</sup> Bourdieu, *The Logic*, 59.

<sup>482</sup> The location of their houses was acquired through interviews with descendents of these families. Only the Jurdak and Khawli families still own their original plots.

<sup>483</sup> Edward Casey, “Between Geography and Philosophy: What Does it Mean to Be in the Place-World?,” *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 19 4 (Dec. 2001): 687.

In the space of these few blocks, the Protestants charged Ras Beirut with the particular rhythm and routine of their everyday life.<sup>484</sup> According to Fadlo Khawli, “the Americans introduced the five o’clock tea and cakes; things which didn’t exist here [before]. They had a system of visitation – in groups, it would be known that on such a day Khawli had an open house so that there would be no need to send out invitations.”<sup>485</sup> Indeed, the college faculty wives of both the Anglo-American and the Arab Protestant community hosted regular afternoon teas, many of which were tied to charity concerns. Charlotte Ward refers to the meetings of the Ras Beirut Young Woman’s Christian Association (YWCA), presided over by Heda Dumit in 1914 and of the Mothers’ Club headed by Selma Makdisi in 1927. Added to these meetings were “Days At Home” afternoons by rotation, when the women received visitors with tea and cake on pre-assigned days in their homes.<sup>486</sup> These afternoon teas were, however, “the Protestants mainly together,” and did not include the older Ras Beirut Orthodox Christian families, such as the Bekh‘azi and Rebeiz families.<sup>487</sup> Marianna Khawli Makdisi had her “regular reception day” for tea on Thursdays.<sup>488</sup> An elaborate affair, “the hostess would honor one of the guests by asking her to pour the tea.”<sup>489</sup> Leah Jurdak, had the first Tuesday afternoon of every month from three to five in the afternoon. Hosting up to between twenty and twenty-five women involved considerable time to prepare sandwiches,

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<sup>484</sup> Mitchell, “Holy Landscapes,” 198.

<sup>485</sup> Fadlo Khawli interview.

<sup>486</sup> Charlotte Ward to Family, April 24, 1914; May 14, 1927; April 4, 1930, ASC, MHC.

<sup>487</sup> Fadlo Khawli interview.

<sup>488</sup> Makdisi Cortas, 13.

<sup>489</sup> Shaheen Haffar, 135.

cookies, and cakes, not to mention the cost involved.<sup>490</sup> To ensure all had a chance to host and that all costs would be shared, “Days At Home” schedules were set a year in advance and printed on booklets.<sup>491</sup>

In addition to discussions of charity work and fundraising, the women also exchanged recipes at these gatherings. The YWCA published a “Cookery Book” in English and Arabic, distributed to its members and sold for charity to provide a guide to “the newcomer.”<sup>492</sup> Included were recipes for Syrian dishes, such as *Kibbeh* and *Kefta*, and hybrid Arab-American recipes, such as “*Sour-milk Scones*” that used local staples such as sour-milk, in Arabic *leben*, to replace cream. Short on instructions, the recipe listed the ingredients in English and Arabic as:

3 teacupfuls [sic] flour  
6 tablespoons butter  
2 teaspoonfuls [sic] sugar  
1 teaspoonful carbonate soda  
1 ½ teaspoons cream of tartar or 2 baking powder  
Sour-milk (*leben*) to mix<sup>493</sup>

As indicated by the recipe, U.S. ingredients, such as cream of tartar, carbonate of soda, baking powder, and vanilla, were critical staples for homebaked cakes and cookies.

Benjamin Baroody, married to Jirjis Makdisi’s eldest daughter Sumaya, made sure baking powder and other U.S. products imported through his business were available to

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<sup>490</sup> Jurdak Khoury interview.

<sup>491</sup> Jurdak Khoury interview. Raja Hajjar, April 2, 2012. Fuad Haddad, March 2012. Unfortunately I was not able to find a copy of these booklets yet.

<sup>492</sup> “Preface,” *YWCA Cookery Book*, (American Press, Beirut, n.d.). Thanks to Mary-Averett Seelye and Ann Irvine for saving this book for me

<sup>493</sup> *YWCA Cookery Book*, 155.

Ras Beirut home bakers (Figure 42).<sup>494</sup> In the YWCA cookbook Baroody Brothers and Company advertised *Rumford Baking Powder* to ensure wholesome food for “your growing children and your grown-ups too.”<sup>495</sup> Anis Nassif, who ran the College Store located on the university campus also assured YWCA cookbook readers that “I have the pleasure in informing you that I always keep in stock most of the ingredients that compose the recipes of this Cook Book. Pure food American products always prove to be the best.”<sup>496</sup> And an advertisement for “Cortas’s Jams, Jellies, and Marmalades” in fourteen different flavors showcased the products of the Cortas Canning and Refrigerating Company run by brothers Emile and Michel Cortas (Figure 43). All part of the Ras Beirut Protestant network, the Baroody, Nassif, and Cortas entrepreneurs put their local initiative and innovation to work for Ras Beirut’s specific tastes.

Afternoon teas and “Days At Home” were most often women only affairs, but evening visits, or *sahras*, were men and women together. Like the womens’ visits, days would be designated ahead of time; “Tuesday it would be at Shaker Nassar’s house, after that Bayt (house of) Baroody, Bayt Makdisi – for two weeks everyday would be somewhere.”<sup>497</sup> Wednesday evenings were especially designated for religion-inflected practices, sometimes accompanied by Nelly Kurban’s piano playing to spiritual hymns, sometimes with words offered by the Protestant pastor and a final blessing after which tea

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<sup>494</sup> Baroody Damlugi, 20. Raja Baroody, interview with author, December 2, 2010.

<sup>495</sup> *YWCA Cookery Book*, 115.

<sup>496</sup> *YWCA Cookery Book*, 25.

<sup>497</sup> Fadlo Khawli interview.



and ka'ak (hard sesame or sweet bread) were served.”<sup>498</sup> No one drank alcohol and the few who smoked did so in moderation. Samir Makdisi recalls his father's strict discipline of “two cigarettes after lunch.”<sup>499</sup> These evening gatherings ended at ten o'clock sharp, the time they referred to as the “hour of return.” Some, like Ibrahim Shehadeh “crack[ed] jokes about the Ras Beirut Protestants going to bed so early [...] he would say all the good Protestants go to bed but we continue our *sahra*” to stay up late and play bridge.<sup>500</sup> Shehadeh described his father-in-law, Jabr Dumit, invariably dozing off to suddenly jolt awake and announce it was time to go home.

Former SPC student and later distinguished professor of history, Constantine Zurayk, married to Najla Cortas the sister of Emile Cortas, clearly demarcated the psychological and spatial boundaries of this Protestant zone of Ras Beirut. From Hamra Street to Bliss Street, he marked off Jabr Dumit's house on the western line, Bulus Khawli's house on eastern line, and Jirjis and Anis Makdisis' houses in the middle. This area defined the community's sense of security and familiarity where children could roam freely from one house to the other.<sup>501</sup> Here the community moved around, or to use Zurayk's words, ambulated *within (natagawwal fi dakhilha)*. The areas without, in contrast, were cautioned against because of thick mud or threats of personal

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<sup>498</sup> Baroody Damlugi, 54. “Constantine Zurayk,” in Rebeiz, 85. Fadlo Khawli interview. Shehadeh interview.

<sup>499</sup> Shaheen Haffar, 129-30. Samir Makdisi, conversation with author, April 10, 2012.

<sup>500</sup> Shehadeh interview.

<sup>501</sup> de Certeau, 106-7. Discusses the concept of habitability and making places habitable based on a discourse of what he calls “local authority.”

harassment.<sup>502</sup> Mariam Cortas Said, daughter of Emile Cortas described this same area where she grew up on Jeanne D’Arc Street as a “compound” where as children they played safely in the streets.<sup>503</sup> Unquestioned and taken for granted, habitation meant “a place one feels ontologically secure.”<sup>504</sup> Inhabiting a world in spatial relation to each other, these families rooted themselves to place and wound their everyday lives through the streets of Ras Beirut. Their parallel professional, social, and family schedules animated Ras Beirut with a quotidian habituality reinforcing a collective sense of purpose, belonging, and neighborhood. Everyone had somewhere to be at sometime, whether it was school, work, or social visiting. Bulus Khawli’s daughter, Sumaya, tells of never needing a watch because she always either saw or heard the clock of AUB’s College Hall.<sup>505</sup> At the heart of the heart of Protestant Ras Beirut was the so-called Miss Amineh School, the elementary school presided over by the indomitable Amineh Makdisi, the sister of Jirjis and Anis Makdisi.

### **Miss Amineh’s School**

Arguably the most distinctive characteristic of these cultural Protestants was their commitment to education. This is not to say that other communities, whether Christian or Muslim did not share this concern, but the comprehensive emphasis Protestants placed on education as a means to personal and social advancement and opportunity was

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<sup>502</sup> “Constantine Zurayk,” in Rebeiz, (my translation) 85.

<sup>503</sup> Mariam Cortas Said, interview with author, May 26, 2011. Also, others talked about playing in the streets, a car passing by every fifteen minutes.

<sup>504</sup> Easthope, 134.

<sup>505</sup> Khawli Nawfal interview.

overwhelmingly consistent. For their children, Beirut offered many Protestant or Protestant-modeled schools, such as the SPC's Preparatory School for boys established in 1878 (later the International College) that ensured entry to the college. For girls, Beirut boasted numerous Protestant schools. Before the First World War, most Protestant daughters attended either the American School for Girls (ASG) or the British Training School for Girls (BTSG) both established by missionaries in Beirut in the first half of the nineteenth century. A few attended the Prussian School founded in 1860 and run by the Deaconess of Kaiserwerth.<sup>506</sup> After World War I, the French appropriated all German property and on the site of the Prussian school established a Protestant counterpart to the British and American schools, the College Protestant Pour Jeunes Filles (CP).<sup>507</sup> A fourth school, the Syrian National School for Girls known as *al-Ahliyya* was founded in 1916 by a Marie Kassab. Kassab was both a product of missionary school education and daughter of Salim Kassab, the "native helper" of Elizabeth Bowan Thompson who founded the BTSG.<sup>508</sup> *Al-Ahliyya* was modeled on the missionary school prototype, but was secular in fostering a sense of Arab national consciousness in its students, especially in its anti-French tendencies.<sup>509</sup> Of these schools, two were located in Ras Beirut, the SPC Prep School and later, the CP.

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<sup>506</sup> Ellen Fleischmann, "Female Education and American Protestant Missionary Schools, c. 1870-1920s." Julia Hauser, "Mothers of a Future Generation: An argument for female education and its appropriation." Both papers presented at Orient Institute conference, April 19-21, 2012. Under the terms of the Treaty of Lausanne of 1923 the French appropriated all German property in the newly created French mandate of Lebanon, including the school, hospital (Johanniter Hospital where SPC doctors practiced), and residence of the Deaconess. Nadya Jeanne Sbaiti, *Lessons in History: Education and the Formation of National Society in Beirut, Lebanon, 1920-1960s* (Georgetown University, Ph.D Dissertation, 2008), 78.

<sup>507</sup> Under the leadership of Louise Vegman, see Sbaiti, 80-81.

<sup>508</sup> Said Makdisi, "Thompson," 92.

While Jirjis Makdisi sent his older daughters, Sumaya and Selma, to the ASG, he sent his youngest daughter Wadad, who “prayed and read the Bible constantly,” to the *al-Ahliyya* School. Jirjis worried that she would turn into a “religious missionary,”<sup>510</sup> perhaps like his sister Amineh, who ran the American School for Girls in Ras Beirut (*Madrasa lil Banaat Al-Amerikiyya fi Ras Beirut*) known as *Sitt* (Miss) Amineh’s School.

Only a few report cards kept by her former students and some letters of correspondence with Amineh Makdisi remain to trace the record of this “best school in the world.”<sup>511</sup> The lack of written sources, however, is counterbalanced by the numerous recollections of the school that still figure prominently in the memories of her former students.<sup>512</sup> Indeed, her austerity, her discipline, and her commitment to work still inspire them with a combination of admiration and fear. Her students came from all religious backgrounds, mostly Protestant and Orthodox Christian with a few Sunni Muslim and Druze children of Ras Beirut. By name, it was a school for girls, but it also admitted some boys, and ran from first grade up to the sixth grade.

At the center of Ras Beirut, Miss Amineh’s school occupied the first floor of a two-story building on Makdisi Street, between Jeanne D’Arc and Sadat Streets to its east and west, and Bliss and Hamra Streets to its north and south. Amineh lived on the upper floor of the building with her mother, Mariam el-Khoury or Im-Jirjis (the mother of

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<sup>509</sup> Sbaiti, 65.

<sup>510</sup> Miriam Cortas Said, “Introduction,” in *A World I Loved* by Wadad Makdisi Cortas, xi. Wadad and her sister Selma were also among the first female students to attend AUB that opened up to women in 1924. See Anderson, *The American University of Beirut*, for more on female education- co-ed.

<sup>511</sup> Baroody Damlugi interview.

<sup>512</sup> I only discovered this school’s existence through interviews.

Jirjis).<sup>513</sup> In Jirjis Makdisi's memoir, he lists his sister Amineh as the fourth child born in 1876 in Amar al-Hosn north of Tripoli. The family moved back to Tripoli in 1879 where Amineh and her sisters attended the Tripoli Girls' School and where Jirjis later taught.<sup>514</sup> Unlike her brothers, Amineh left no memoir behind. She may have graduated from high school in the mid-1890s, though her younger brother Anis mentions the rather late year of 1906.<sup>515</sup> After her high-school degree, "like a PhD then" for women, she taught in Tripoli and also in Egypt.<sup>516</sup> Her niece, Wadad Makdisi Cortas writes of Amineh being "among the first Lebanese women to go to Egypt."<sup>517</sup> One can safely assume that she moved to Ras Beirut after she returned from Egypt and after her brothers settled there. Though the exact year Amineh opened her school is yet to be ascertained, her move to Ras Beirut must have been around World War I, though some insist that she opened the school after the war in the mid-1920s.<sup>518</sup> More certain is the date of Amineh's retirement in 1948 and her death in 1959 at the age of eighty-three. In 1948, a Protestant woman Rida Jureidini, took over the school and moved it a few blocks east.<sup>519</sup>

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<sup>513</sup> Raja Baroody interview.

<sup>514</sup> Jirjis El-Khoury El-Makdisi, *Notes*, 9.

<sup>515</sup> Anis El-Khoury El-Makdisi, 86.

<sup>516</sup> Nida Makdisi Ma'alouf, interview with author, March 17, 2011. Anis El-Khoury El-Makdisi mentions that Amineh worked in Lebanon and Egypt, 87.

<sup>517</sup> Makdisi Cortas, *The World*, 53. Another Syrian woman who travelled to Egypt in 1897 was Emilia Badr, the daughter of the first Arab Protestant pastor, Yusef Badr. Emilia then co-founded with an American woman Ella Kyle what would become the American College for Girls in Cairo (today called Ramses College) in 1901. It was the "first school in Egypt to offer higher education for women" which included a department of teacher training. Makdisi, *Teta*, 200.

<sup>518</sup> Raja Hajjar, nephew of Rida Jureidini, interview with author, April 2, 2012.

<sup>519</sup> The Church Council asked Rida Jureidini, an unmarried Protestant woman who was the acting principal of the ASG, to take over the school. In 1965 the National Evangelical Church took over its administration and bought its property, Hajjar interview.

Though Amineh's arrival in Ras Beirut is not recorded, the scene of her departure from Tripoli is recalled with flare. As she boarded the ship that made a monthly stop in Tripoli en route from Cyprus to Beirut, Amineh's family gathered to bid her farewell "as if she were going to the U.S."<sup>520</sup> During the overnight journey to Beirut, a British officer allegedly asked her to dance to whom she responded indignantly, "Dance? I am a Protestant!"<sup>521</sup> Another niece relates that Amineh's rejected a marriage proposal because he belonged to a different denomination. All this to say that she never married and was remembered as a "Protestant from the top of her head to the soles of her feet."<sup>522</sup>

The earliest mention of Amineh appears in Beirut's National Evangelical Church records to note her organization of the church's Sunday school program in April 1919.<sup>523</sup> A series of letters from the Treasurer of the American Mission to Amineh Khoury (as the Khoury-Makdisi family was then known) from 1926 to 1934 indicates that Amineh received an annual appropriation of \$910 from the Anglo-American Mission, of which three hundred dollars went towards the rent of what the Treasurer called the *Ras Beirut School*.<sup>524</sup> Further, an Advisory Committee oversaw the School and Amineh received a

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<sup>520</sup> Makdisi Maalouf, interview.

<sup>521</sup> Makdisi Maalouf interview.

<sup>522</sup> Baroody Damlugi, 78 (my translation).

<sup>523</sup> Minutes of Church council meetings, Volume 1: 19/5/1848 – 2/7/1922, 6 April, 1919, 273. National Evangelical Church, Beirut, Lebanon. Thanks to Reverend Habib Badr for making these records available.

<sup>524</sup> Copies of these letters are housed at the Near East School of Theology (NEST), Beirut, Lebanon; NEST archives are still in the process of being organized. As such there are no specific folders or boxes on record. Dr. Christine Lindner is charged with their archival and I thank her for bringing them to my attention.

salary.<sup>525</sup> While Amineh may have taken the initiative to start the school in Ras Beirut, she clearly enjoyed financial support from the Anglo-American Mission. In all likelihood, Amineh's school may have been an informal branch of the Anglo-American missionary school network thus explaining its appellation the American School for Girls in Ras Beirut on a report card kept by one of its graduates, Raja Afif Iliya.<sup>526</sup>

Raja Afif Iliya attended Miss Amineh's school for most of his elementary years from 1932 until 1938 after which he attended the International College (IC), formerly the SPC's Preparatory School. At Miss Amineh's school he studied the Bible, Arabic, English, French, Math, Geography, History, and took classes in penmanship in the three languages, Handiwork, Drawing, Music, Physical Education, Cleanliness and Orderliness, Diligence, and Conduct.<sup>527</sup> Students were forbidden to speak Arabic during recess. If caught they received a small wooden counter, called the "signal," and would have to keep it until someone else spoke Arabic. If you got the signal more than once, you would suffer Amineh's wrath and write "'I will not speak Arabic again during recess' a hundred times."<sup>528</sup>

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<sup>525</sup> American Mission Treasurer to Amineh Khoury, August 1, 1927 and December 9, 1931, Archives at NEST.

<sup>526</sup> Raja Afif Iliya *report card*. Henry Glockler who became head of the American Mission in charge of the annual appropriation to Amineh was married to Anne Jessup (in 1931) who was the principal of the American School for Girls (ASG).

<sup>527</sup> Raja Afif Iliya, interview with author, April 2, 2012.

<sup>528</sup> Samir Makdisi conversation. Shaheen Haffar, 124. The same punishment was meted out in the *al-Ahliyya*, the ASG, and the BTSG where most of Amineh's female graduates continued their education; Sbaiti, *Lessons*, 144.

Iliya remembers being “scared of her all the time.”<sup>529</sup> Amineh was so strict that if a child misbehaved s/he was kept at school instead of going home for lunch. When Iliya’s elder brother Na’ameh did not come home on one occasion, his father went to the school to ask his whereabouts. Amineh explained Na’ameh’s punishment and told his father that if he took Na’ameh home “you don’t come back.”<sup>530</sup> In response, Iliya’s father moved all his sons to IC until Na’ameh graduated after which Raja returned to Amineh’s school for his last two years of elementary school. Another student Najwa Shaheen’s strategy for dealing with her fear of Amineh was “to imagine her with her glasses and tight white bun, riding a bicycle, a mental image that also worked for me when I was being scolded by my father.”<sup>531</sup> Another student recalls when he was on a prolonged family visit to Ras Beirut, he and his cousin fibbed about their age so they could be together in the same class. When Amineh visited the student’s mother to discover his actual age and caught the boys lying, he recalled, “my God, that was the first crisis in my life!”<sup>532</sup>

Miss Amineh relied on morality tales for character education in History and Geography. Her students learned about important “men in history” such as George Washington and Abraham Lincoln.<sup>533</sup> She told them of Washington chopping down his father’s favorite cherry tree and his admission to the deed to demonstrate how this historic figure “was a truthful boy.”<sup>534</sup> Her telling of the story of Lincoln’s rise from

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<sup>529</sup> Iliya Interview.

<sup>530</sup> Ibid.

<sup>531</sup> Shaheen Haffar, 124.

<sup>532</sup> Samir Shehadeh interview.

<sup>533</sup> Baroody Damlugi interview.



humble beginnings to serve as president illustrated the rewards of hard work and perseverance. To the students, such associations were transposed on the U.S. as a whole, as a place of honesty, hard work, and equal opportunity. As one student readied for her first U.S. trip, a friend shocked her with a warning of purse snatching in New York City.<sup>535</sup>

Moreover, Amineh's school served as a place to perform and reenact Ras Beirut Protestant identity, even when it included non-Protestants.<sup>536</sup> The school day began around the piano with hymns and prayers. Amineh read the daily prayer and her sister, Esther, played the piano. Besides Protestant children, children of the Christian Orthodox and Muslim families of Ras Beirut also attended the school, such as Munir Shama'a, Fatima al-Itani, Awatif Sidani, Nadim Dimishkieh, Sophia Ahmad al-Lababidi, and Munah and Hisham al-Solh.<sup>537</sup> Munir Shama'a's recalls wondering about the immaculate conception but never understanding what it meant until he reached puberty.<sup>538</sup> Mona Baroody Damlugi remembers that her Muslim classmate Fatima al-Itani ranked first in

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<sup>534</sup> Ibid.

<sup>535</sup> Jean Said Makdisi, conversation with the author, March 14, 2012.

<sup>536</sup> Casey, 412. Christine Lindner, "'In this Religion I Will Live, and in this Religion I Will Die': Performativity and the Protestant Identity in Late Ottoman Syria," *Chronos Revue d'Histoire de l'Universite de Balamand* 22 (2010): 26.

<sup>537</sup> Awatif Sidani Dabbous, interview with author, December 18, 2010; Munah al-Solh, "'Anni wa'an Ra's Beirut wa al-Madrastayn al-Meethaqiyya wa al-shahabiyya,' *An-Nahar* (21 December, 2009), 8.

<sup>538</sup> Shama'a, 18.

Bible Class.<sup>539</sup> Muslim classmates even took part in Amineh's Sunday school because it was so much fun singing songs, even Chinese ones.<sup>540</sup>

The entire community helped run the Sunday school. Kamal Salibi remembers that his mother and his two older brothers helped out. Salibi's eldest brother Bahij, who studied medicine at the college, suggested widening the intellectual horizons of the older children with lectures on topics such as Darwinian theory. These programs drew larger audiences and many Muslim families encouraged their children to attend.<sup>541</sup> Salibi's other brother, Sami got his start teaching music at the school in 1939 and established a student choir that performed for parents, the community, and even on the Lebanese Radio.<sup>542</sup> In 1954, Sami Salibi established the Ras Beirut Center for Music that became a landmark in the lives of the many musically inclined.<sup>543</sup> Indeed, when the Anglo-American families were evacuated to British mandated Palestine during World War II, many sold their pianos and "every family in Ras Beirut bought one and the Methode Rose (first year piano teaching methods), and later, Hanon and Czerny exercises could be heard coming out of every window."<sup>544</sup> A piano was such a necessary requisite for family entertainment

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<sup>539</sup> Baroody Damlugi interview.

<sup>540</sup> Ibid.

<sup>541</sup> Salibi, *Tay'ir ala Sindiyana*, 79.

<sup>542</sup> Shaheen Haffar, 139.

<sup>543</sup> Wadad Khairallah Salibi, *Linatathakkir Sami Salibi (Sami Salibi Remembered)* (Beirut: World Book Press, 2004).

<sup>544</sup> Music was very much a part of life in Ras Beirut. In 1929, Arkadi Kougell, a Russian émigré, established the School of Music at AUB and his thirty-five-piece symphony orchestra gave musical performances twice a month regularly attended by the Ras Beirut community. Kougell lived near the Makdisi's house on Jeanne d'Arc Street and because the whole family played piano, all day long the piano could be heard up and down the street; Shaheen Haffar, 139-140.

and socialization that in the case of Daud Kurban's family, when faced with a choice of buying land in Ras Beirut or buying a piano for his musically inclined children, much to their later regret they chose a piano!<sup>545</sup>

For all her sternness, Miss Amineh was a "role model" especially to her niece Wadad Makdisi Cortas, who later headed the *al-Ahliyya* School for Girls, which influenced later generations of young women.<sup>546</sup> Wadad kept her aunt's example close to heart in a story she told her own children: Amineh visited to a mosque with her brother and a group of his all male friends. As she was about to ascend the minaret, the attendant stopped her and told her she could not climb up because "God gave you half a brain and made you inherit half a man's share." She brushed past him and replied "God gave me a full brain, and it is men like you who gave me half the inheritance."<sup>547</sup> Clearly Miss Amineh possessed a strong personality that left a formative impression on the hearts and minds of her young students. Her voice is still heard in their heads today. Her austerity, her discipline, and her ability to instill the fear of God in her students, inculcated these Ras Beirut children, no matter what denomination, with built-in dispositions of cultural Protestantism.

### **Second Generation Ras Beirut Enterprise**

The second generation of Ras Beirut's Protestants saw the foundation of two entrepreneurial ventures that grew out of the combination of the Arab Protestant network

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<sup>545</sup> Khaled al-Rasy interview, March 7, 2012. Real estate in Ras Beirut skyrocketed from then on.

<sup>546</sup> Mariam Cortas Said, xxxi. Sbaiti describes Wadad Makdisi Cortas "a force of nature" in *Lessons*, 68.

<sup>547</sup> Cortas Said, xxxi.

and an Anglo-American college education. Jabr Dumit's son, Najuib, established the Dumit Dairy and Emile Cortas, who would marry Wadad Makdisi, established the Cortas Canning and Refrigerating Company, or Cortas Brothers. Both of these food-related industries represent a shift in gears from the salaried educators of the first generation to the self-employed bourgeois entrepreneurs of the second generation. Dumit and Cortas harnessed their individual initiative, educational experience, and opportunism to play out in the local context of Ras Beirut. In particular, these two ventures, the Dumit Dairy and Cortas Brothers, exemplify how "habitus is not to be confused with mere routine [...] it is also improvisational and open to innovation."<sup>548</sup>

The Dumit Dairy abutted the playground behind Miss Amineh's school. Dumit Dairy's famous chocolate milk won instant success with the students who shouted out their orders over the wall to the dairy employees. Memories of recess immediately conjured up associations with chocolate milk – sweetening Amineh's disciplinary edge.<sup>549</sup> Najwa Shaheen recalls "their delicious chilled milk, or better still, chilled cocoa, which came in frosted square bottles with a paper straw."<sup>550</sup>

The youngest son of Jabr Dumit, Naguib graduated from AUB in 1925 and then went to the U.S. to earn a degree in agricultural engineering specializing in dairy production and manufacturing. He returned to Beirut in 1927 and in 1930 started the dairy in Ras Beirut.<sup>551</sup> A landmark in the food industry, his dairy was the first to offer

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<sup>548</sup> Casey, *Textures of Place*, 409.

<sup>549</sup> Almost all interviewees mentioned chocolate milk from Dumit's during recess. Samir Shehadeh interview; Fadlo Khawli interview; Raja Hajjar interview.

<sup>550</sup> Shaheen Haffar, 123.

pasteurized milk in Lebanon, and according to his nephew, the entire Middle East.<sup>552</sup>

Naguib first bought milk from the local market gardens of the Shehab and Shatila families in Ras Beirut and operated his dairy from home. With a few employees they pasteurized the milk at one in the morning and then delivered the products to customers on horse drawn carriages between five and ten in the morning to the tune of two hundred and fifty kilograms a day.<sup>553</sup> After a few years of small-scale success, the business expanded into a partnership with the goal of building a dairy factory for the making of milk and cheese. In 1935 in one of the first multi-story structures on the western end of Hamra Street, the Dumit Dairy opened. They equipped the three-floor factory with the latest sterilization machines shipped from the U.S..

The years of the Second World War were the greatest boon for Dumit Dairy. When the Free French and British troops entered Beirut in 1941, they established a prison for Vichy French and German prisoners of war a few blocks up the hill from the dairy. The prison commissioned the dairy to supply them with a daily delivery of milk and other products. The biggest contract, however, to supply the military headquarters of the Australian army a ton of milk a day.<sup>554</sup> With this huge demand, the dairy bought milk from large-scale distributors in the Beka'a Valley and Sidon.<sup>555</sup> After the war they sold

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<sup>551</sup> *Directory of Alumni, 1870-1952*, Alumni Association (Beirut: The American University of Beirut, April 1953) Class of 1925, 161.

<sup>552</sup> Shehadeh interview.

<sup>553</sup> "Elias 'Issa," Rebeiz, 143-146.

<sup>554</sup> Ibid.

<sup>555</sup> Shehadeh interview. Especially from Naguib's former college friend, Adel Osseiran who had a farm in Sidon, Adel Osseiran was a prominent diplomat from the notable family of the Osseirans of the South of Lebanon.

milk in the newly opened small food markets of Ras Beirut, the college's West Hall milk bar, and a few restaurants, such as Fayssal's. Most of their production, however, still went to Ras Beirut home delivery.<sup>556</sup>

At roughly the same time, Emile Cortas established the Cortas Canning and Refrigerating Company or Cortas Brothers in 1928 with the production of jams and condiments. The Cortas jam making endeavor originated in the humanitarian relief effort organized during the widespread famine that hit Syria as a result of blockades imposed during of the First World War. Emile's parents, Tanyius and Mariam Cortas were Quakers who taught at the Quaker School established by the Society of Friends in the mountain town of Brummana in 1879.<sup>557</sup> As the famine spread through the mountain villages, Emile's mother volunteered her help to support Arthur Dray's soup kitchen in Brummana (of Chapter 3) to feed starving villagers from the surrounding regions. Mariam Cortas cooked one meal a day and she and her husband managed the whole operation under Dray's supervision.<sup>558</sup> The kitchen first opened in the backyard of the Cortas house, where Emile's mother organized village women to prepare the daily meal and instructed the young Emile to stir the jam.<sup>559</sup>

Once the war ended, Emile used his jam making expertise to fund his college education at AUB's School of Commerce. Head of the school, Edward Nickoley

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<sup>556</sup> Shehadheh interview.

<sup>557</sup> "The Cortas Family Homepage," <http://www.oocities.org/heartland/hills/1786/>.

<sup>558</sup> Margaret McGilvary, "How an Englishman Kept Four Thousand Syrians Alive," *Dawn*, 228. Thanks to Christine Lindner for bringing this chapter to my attention

<sup>559</sup> Nadim Cortas, conversation with author, February 10, 2011. Later it moved to an abandoned hotel to accommodate many over a thousand people.

encouraged Emile to pursue the idea of a fruit confection and jam business based on the quality of his jams. Emile attended classes during the week and produced jam on the weekends.<sup>560</sup> Emile turned his senior project, “Fruit Preservation as an Industry for Syria,” into the blue print for his business venture. The year after his AUB graduation, in 1926, he travelled to Dublin to apprentice with the Lambs of Ireland, fellow Quakers and “famous jam-makers,” and within the next year, in 1928, he established the Cortas Canning Company.<sup>561</sup>

Like the Dumit Dairy, Cortas Brothers was a homegrown cottage industry. Emile’s mother made the jam in her Brummana kitchen and Emile sold it to the college community and businesses in Ras Beirut. Slowly the business grew in the face of foreign competition and prejudice against local production. At first, only Adeeb Fayssal proprietor of the famous Fayssal’s Restaurant on Bliss Street bought Emile’s jam and urged him to make more.<sup>562</sup> In 1929, a large order from the French military authorities gave the company the push it needed to build a factory for larger scale production. In the 1930s, Emile’s younger brother, Michel, with a degree in Chemistry, joined the company and they expanded the repertoire of products to include fruit preserves, syrups, tomato paste and vinegar. They also manufactured their own cans.

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<sup>560</sup> Nadim Cortas.

<sup>561</sup> Fuad Kavar, “Cortas Freres,” *Al-Kulliyah Review* (May 1941) 10-11; Cortas Canning and Refrigerating Company website, “About Us”, <http://www.cortasfood.com/AboutUs.asp> (accessed June 10, 2012). Sami Cortas, conversation with author, February 8, 2011.

<sup>562</sup> Nadim Cortas. Fayssal’s also served as a place where students could store their food from home on a weekly basis and would be charged a small fee for the food preparation and the couvert in exchange.

Similar to Dumit Dairy, Cortas Brothers won their largest consignment during the Second World War when the British Army commissioned them to “supply marmalade to British troops stationed in the area,” necessitating “a three-shift schedule in order to satisfy demand.”<sup>563</sup> After the war, the company continued to expand and sought new markets to appeal to Lebanese expats all over the world under the management of Fadlo Khawli (Bulus Khawli’s youngest son), a cousin and fellow Protestant of Ras Beirut. In the meantime, Emile married Wadad, the daughter of Jirjis Makdisi, and Michel married Mona, the niece of Bulus Khawli, literally folding the Quaker Cortas Brothers into the Ras Beirut Protestant web. Brothers Emile and Michel were also such complementary partners that according to one observer, their only disagreement was the way Michel said “tomatoes” and Emile said “tomahtoes.”<sup>564</sup>

### **Ras Beirut Protestant Dispositions**

While it would be hard put to cast this community in George Gershwin’s film *Shall We Dance* (1937), the social calendars, routines, and entrepreneurial ventures describe a coordinated community that is “collectively orchestrated without being the product of the organizing action of a conductor.”<sup>565</sup> Through weekly “at home” afternoon teas and evening “sahra” gatherings, Sunday school, milk deliveries, and fruit preserves, the Protestant community grounded Ras Beirut in a tight association of people

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<sup>563</sup> Cortas website.

<sup>564</sup> Kavar, 11.

<sup>565</sup> Bourdieu, *The Logic*, 53.



and place, so much so that community identity, practice, and place become inextricably bound to a collective disposition.<sup>566</sup> Mona Baroody Damlugi explains,

Our lives were what was called Ras Beiruti Protestant. And the Protestants back then were known as good people with high values, straight laced that didn't know the meaning of lying and cheating – very few smoked and they drank alcohol only on special occasions like weddings or feasts. And they didn't know the meaning of insults and swearing and to those that deserved insults they would say “*ya ayb al-shoom*” (shame on you). Gambling never entered any of their houses and card playing was considered for the lazy to take care of boredom.<sup>567</sup>

The more established the community became, the more its group habitus synchronized to place. The practice of cultural Protestantism arranged their lived lives around “a new organization of society.”<sup>568</sup>

The practice of a cultural Protestantism, as opposed to a pious Protestantism, characterized their collective behavior. Their commitment to education, discipline, order, industriousness, moral outlook, and strong sense of community belonging manifested itself “in a system of dispositions, that is of permanent manners of being, seeing, acting, and thinking, or a system of long-lasting (rather than permanent) schemes and schemata or structures of perception, conception, and action.”<sup>569</sup> These dispositions or manners emerged from the conversion to Protestantism conversion which catapulted individuals on to the educational stepping stones that led to Ras Beirut. In that bumpy transition from

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<sup>566</sup> Certeau, 117, “A place is thus an instantaneous configuration of positions. It implies an indication of stability.”

<sup>567</sup> Baroody Damlugi, 54 (my translation).

<sup>568</sup> Peter Van Der Veer, Introduction, in *Conversion to Modernities: the Globalization of Christianity*, ed. Peter Van Der Veer (New York, London: Routledge, 1996), 20.

<sup>569</sup> Bourdieu, *The Logic*, 56.

scattered dispersion to convergence these Protestant converts arguably found a collective sense of vindication in their association with Ras Beirut and with the college.<sup>570</sup>

Conversion to Protestantism entailed attitudinal shifts that drew a line between converts and former co-religionists. Although both groups were Christian, becoming Protestant meant separation from the “native church” and by extension the larger family clan. In the early nineteenth century apostasy could entail excommunication, social alienation, and at times physical violence for converts from the Maronite and the Greek Catholic churches.<sup>571</sup> In contrast, the more decentralized Greek Orthodox church led by a Greek upper clergy left day-to-day affairs in the hands of Arab parish priests who were not well trained and in some cases barely literate. This loose association between upper and lower clergy meant that no official punishment spelled out consequences for those who left the Orthodox Church to join the Protestant one. Converts did not suffer communal banishment or prosecution and instead maintained friendly relations with members of their families who remained Greek Orthodox.<sup>572</sup> This partly explains the Orthodox Christian background of the bulk of Protestant converts in Ottoman Syria. In this sense, conversion was not so much a revolutionary break with the past, as a seizing of the individual agency in a new way of life with all that meant in terms of self-advancement, access to education, and the security and opportunity that may or may not

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<sup>570</sup> Bourdieu, *Outline*, 85.

<sup>571</sup> Makdisi’s account of the life of the Protestant convert Asa‘ad Shidyaq in the early nineteenth century, *Artillery*, 2008. Also Jeremy Salt, “Trouble Wherever They Went: American Missionaries in Anatolia and Ottoman Syria in the Nineteenth Century,” in *Altruism and Imperialism: Western Cultural and Religious Missions in the Middle East*, E. H. Tejirian and R.S. Simon eds. (New York: Middle East Institute, Columbia University, 2002).

<sup>572</sup> Salibi, “Arab Protestant Heritage,” 136-137.

accompany that change of life. To Bulus Khawli part of the appeal of conversion was his admiration of the missionary way of life he described as “so clean.”<sup>573</sup> This is not to say that Protestant converts were insincere in their religious belief, nor does it mean that they did not face a sense of uneasiness with their former co-religionists, often members of their extended family.

Kamal Salibi, widely considered Lebanon’s leading historian and a Ras Beirut Protestant to boot, used his own family history by way of example to illustrate the clash in cultural dispositions between the “old” Orthodox Christian and the “new” Protestant mentality. His family hailed from the large Salibi Orthodox Christian clan of the villages surrounding the town of Bhamdun, one of the earliest out-stations of the American Syrian Mission along what would become the Beirut-Damascus road and railway through the Shuf mountains.<sup>574</sup> As such, the Salibis came into early contact with missionaries and many converted to Protestantism in successive waves starting in the 1840s.<sup>575</sup> Among Salibi’s Protestant ancestors were Mitri Salibi, Jabr Dumit’s father-in-law, of the Protestant School in Shwayr; his maternal grandfather who studied medicine at the SPC until his sympathies for Professor Lewis of the Lewis Affair caused his expulsion in 1882; and his father Sulayman Salibi, an SPC medical graduate, who worked as a career

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<sup>573</sup> Fadlo Khawli interview.

<sup>574</sup> Shereen Khairallah, “The Bhamdun Station,” *Theological Review* 12 1 (1991): 81- 93.

<sup>575</sup> Salibi, “Living with Changing Times,” in *Franco-Arab Encounters: Studies in Honor of David C. Gordon*, L. Carl Brown and Matthew S. Gordon, eds. (Beirut: American University of Beirut, 1997), 158.

medical officer in the Egyptian army in Sudan. Salibi's parents moved to Ras Beirut in 1925, where Kamal was born in 1929.<sup>576</sup>

Salibi explains that Orthodox Christians viewed their converted relations as opportunists at best and traitors and profiteers at worst.<sup>577</sup> Because converts often enjoyed higher standards of living, their former co-religionists suspected them of insincerity and harbored feelings of resentment towards them. Indeed, their appellation as the "Shilling Sect" originates from the coins missionaries allegedly paid converts to subscribe to the missionary project.<sup>578</sup> From the perspective of the converts, however, and in the words of their champion Salibi, the act of conversion was a measure of their "personal daring" and "enterprising spirit" and "social pioneer[ing]."<sup>579</sup>

In a few examples gleaned from the Makdisi memoirs, firm assertions of individual cultural difference, bred by Protestant conversion, stand out. Jirjis relates the story of a Protestant man who wanted to marry an Orthodox Christian woman. Acting on his belief in personal freedoms and the right to marry whomever one chose, Jirjis and a few friends took it upon themselves to intervene on behalf of the man with the Orthodox bishop. The Bishop agreed to officiate the marriage only if the man converted (back) to Orthodox Christianity which upset the Protestant elders. Another occasion he recalls is a lecture he gave in 1888-1889 at a Protestant church in Homs to people of different religions and genders, this being one of the first times both men and women attended an

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<sup>576</sup> Ibid, 167. Salibi attended boarding school in Brummana, a town near Shwayr, where Quakers established a Friends mission and school.

<sup>577</sup> Salibi, "Arab Protestant Heritage," 135.

<sup>578</sup> Ibid, 137; Nabil Adel, conversation with author, October 21, 2010; Fadlo Khawli interview.

<sup>579</sup> Salibi, "Arab Protestant Heritage," 135.

event together in Homs.<sup>580</sup> Jirjis's brother, Anis Makdisi recalls growing up in the Kuba neighborhood of Tripoli, where his family felt like strangers as the only Protestant household among a Orthodox Christian majority. His father was the most educated man in the neighborhood, however, and people of the neighborhood came to their house to listen to his father read them the news.<sup>581</sup> Jean Said Makdisi also notes this sense of difference in her grandmother Munira Badr's wedding preparations. Badr, the daughter of a Protestant minister about to marry a Protestant minister in 1905, repeatedly emphasized to her children and her grandchildren that her she simply washed her face in preparation for her marriage. Implicit in this mention is the stark contrast with the often weeks-long preparations practiced in the traditional Galilean Christian Orthodox wedding celebrations.<sup>582</sup> All of these practices articulated attributes of cultural Protestantism, whether through the assertion of individual rights and responsibilities, emphasis on the importance of learning, or the eradication of superfluity.

Salibi gives a cogent example his parents' exercise of this cultural Protestantism in the face of strong traditional community bonds. When his parents learned of the murder of two innocent Druze villagers by members of the Salibi clan in retribution for the killing of two Salibi family members by two other Druze villagers, they expressed outrage. To the stunned disbelief of the clan, Salibi's parents denounced their relations for committing such a crime and refused them entry to their house. Moreover, they

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<sup>580</sup> Jirjis El-Khoury El-Makdisi, 17-18.

<sup>581</sup> Anis El-Khoury El-Makdisi, 13.

<sup>582</sup> Said Makdisi, *Teta*, 217. Muneira Badr's father was Youssef Badr, the first Arab pastor of the National Evangelical Church of Beirut appointed in 1890. He resigned in 1893 over a dispute involving the organization of the church according to Presbyterian or Congregationalist lines.

declared acts of vengeance to settle village and clan feuds barbaric and to condone them “was to share in their barbarism.”<sup>583</sup> Though Salibi’s parents were not accused of betrayal, Salibi describes “the furtive looks exchanged” when the possibility of his father’s role as clan leader came up in extended family discussions. He was “fully aware that we were different from the people among whom we lived. Our speech was brief and to the point and no matter how we tried we found it difficult to master the elaborate ritual exchange of greetings, compliments and aphorisms which traditionally replaced conversation.”<sup>584</sup> The abandonment of local traditions, social expectations, and even linguistic intonations reflected this fundamental shift in socio-cultural dispositions of Protestants.<sup>585</sup>

Salibi’s description of his family’s mannerisms, further underlines the force of habitus in effecting a sense of dislocation, unwittingly paralleling accounts of Anglo-American missionary encounters with local populations in the preceding years. In 1856, SPC founder Daniel Bliss’s wife, Abby Sweetser Bliss, described her first encounters with local women of Ottoman Syria and of the cumbersome exchange of customary greetings. She wrote of how

they have a great many salutations all of which have their appropriate answers. I am learning these very slowly. Sometimes after a woman has been here half an hour – and everything has been said which we can think of – she will rise, touch her forehead and breast, and go through all the salutations again. I have hard work to maintain my gravity.<sup>586</sup>

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<sup>583</sup> Salibi, “Living,” 162-163.

<sup>584</sup> Ibid, 160-1.

<sup>585</sup> Lindner, “In This Religion,” 28.

Fifty years later, Abby's son and second SPC President, Howard Bliss, ended a letter to his family in Beirut with a request to

please give my salaams [hellos] to Nicky and Yusuf and Sadda and Lateefy, and Jemeely and Miriam and Hama ... and Abdallah [servant of God] and Hamdillah [thanks to God] and Rizkalla [the generosity of God] and Inshallah [if God wills it] and Cora and Benadora [tomato].... and Antoun and Mejnoon [crazy] and Aramoon [a town outside Beirut] and Fullmoon and Typhoon and anybody else who may inquire for me in a really loving and brotherly, sisterly, or relation-by-bloody [sic] way.<sup>587</sup>

Howard Bliss poked fun at the custom not only of endless salutations but also of the seemingly infinite list of niceties that pepper social exchanges in Arabic to inquire after family. Harmless observations perhaps, but indicative of the variance expressed in shifting social and cultural dispositions.

In fact, the Protestants of Ras Beirut claim their clipped intonation in manner of speaking is another mark of their exceptionalism. Fadlo Khawli, son of Bulus Khawli, asserted that local Protestants spoke with much more “civilized” pronunciation and not with a heavy guttural dialect that in Lebanon and Syria gave away village or rural provenance. And while the indigenous Sunni Muslim and Greek Orthodox families of Ras Beirut kept their dialects, the Protestants of Ras Beirut’s “simplified, refined dialect” was adopted by those who came to Ras Beirut from elsewhere.<sup>588</sup> This new manner of speaking Khawli describes as light and for lack of a better word, cleaned up, minimized

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<sup>586</sup> Abby Maria Bliss to Mrs. Luke (Abby) Sweetser (Amherst), Abeih, Mt. Lebanon, Sept. 14, 1856 (Sat. noon), Folder 35, Bliss Family Papers, ASC, Amherst College.

<sup>587</sup> Howard Bliss to Family, September 10, 1905, Folder 91: 1900-1905, Bliss Family Papers, ASC, Amherst College.

<sup>588</sup> Fadlo Khawli interview.

the many Arabic phrases that incorporate God's name such as: *inshallah* (if God wills it), *hamdallah* (thanks to God), *rizkallah* (God's generosity).

Protestants converts, however, did not blindly imitate Anglo-American missionaries. For "conversion is an innovative practice that partakes in the transformation of the social without being a mechanical result of it."<sup>589</sup> Protestant converts certainly looked to the missionary lifestyle by way of example. They grounded their belief in individual effort for community benefit in their endeavors in education, intellectual achievement, and later commercial venture. Living a productive Protestant work ethic, Salibi likened them to their Muslim co-nationals. He noted that their "religious practice was simple, and their services were entirely conducted in perfectly understandable Arabic. Their churches, apart from the benches, looked very much like the plainest mosques, and their ministers dressed and behaved inconspicuously, like ordinary people."<sup>590</sup> Viewed in this way, the forging of Arab Protestant identity within the context of Ras Beirut's mixed community of Sunni Muslims and Orthodox Christians is not surprising. In their convergence on and identification with Ras Beirut, local Protestants rapidly formed new attachments when similar mentalities and shared values gave them room to practice a new hybrid identity.<sup>591</sup>

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<sup>589</sup> Van Der Veer, 7.

<sup>590</sup> Salibi, "Arab Protestant Heritage," 140.

<sup>591</sup> Lindner, "In This Religion." Fleischmann, "I Only Wish I Had a Home."



## **Conclusion**

In many ways, Ras Beirut resembled an American college town with its inhabitants comprised of students, teachers, administrators, and businesses either associated with the college or catering to its needs.<sup>592</sup> At the same time, its association with the distinct identity of the Protestants of Ras Beirut reached well beyond the walls of the college and long outlasted the presence of its Anglo-American residents. Investing Ras Beirut with their self-made initiatives and entrepreneurialism, the Protestants both grew into Ras Beirut and grew Ras Beirut.

Whereas the Anglo-American community viewed Ras Beirut from the outside in, the Ras Beirut Protestants saw it from the inside out. The Anglo-Americans described Ras Beirut in terms they wanted it to be seen to others, especially others at a geographic or temporal distance. The Ras Beirut Protestants internalized their attachment to Ras Beirut and defined it as an extension of their individual and community identity. Defined by education, tolerance, and middle class professionalism, the Protestant community personified Ras Beirut.

A “community in almost every sense of the term,” the Protestants of Ras Beirut shared if not identical, at least similar life histories, language, religion, and profession all of which shaped their collective attitudes and their place identity.<sup>593</sup> Bourdieu’s elaboration on the transition of individual to group habitus applies readily to the Protestants of Ras Beirut when he writes, “habitus is precisely this immanent law inscribed in bodies of identical histories which is the precondition not only for the

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<sup>592</sup> Shaheen Haffar, 118.

<sup>593</sup> Kongstad and Khalaf, *Hamra*, 109-110.

coordination of practices but also the practice of coordination.”<sup>594</sup> In the social context of Ras Beirut, Protestants found a place to practice, perform, and reenact their habitus. Because a “habitus is something we continually put into action,” it generates a specific identification with place especially “by means of habitation.”<sup>595</sup> The Arab Protestants’ thick layering of Ras Beirut through their intermarriage, child rearing, social ritual, and private enterprise left an indelible footprint on place. Indeed, their presence in and association with Ras Beirut is taken so much for granted that their relatively recent extra-Ras Beirut origins have almost been forgotten as if there is no question of them having been from anywhere else.

In words that capture the relationship of Arab Protestants to Ras Beirut, Casey explains how “a particular place gives to habitus a familiar arena for its enactment, and the lack of explicit awareness of that place as such, its very familiarity only enhances its efficacy as a scene in which it is activated....such a place ‘goes without saying because it comes without saying.’”<sup>596</sup> Edward Said, who happened to be a close friend of Bourdieu, perhaps best framed the applicability of the concept of habitus to the Protestants of Ras Beirut as “a coherent amalgam of practices linking habit with inhabitation.”<sup>597</sup> Clearly the link between the life practices, habit formation, social mentality, and inhabitation in setting down roots inseparably forges the relationship between people and place.

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<sup>594</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, “Habitus,” in *Habitus – A Sense of Place*, eds. Jean Hillier and Emma Rooksby (Hants, England and Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing, 2005), 43; Bourdieu, *The Logic*, 56.

<sup>595</sup> Easthope, 133.

<sup>596</sup> Bourdieu, *Outline*, 167.

<sup>597</sup> Edward Said, “Reflections on Exile,” in *Reflections on Exile and Other Essays* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000), 176.

Educated in an Anglo-American missionary tradition, disciplined by a strict daily routine, and possessed by an infallible sense of optimistic exceptionalism, the Protestants gave Ras Beirut momentum. If Ras Beirut centered the habitus of cultural Protestantism, the next Chapter explores the older community of Muslim-Christian Ras Beirutis who tie their identity to place through their narratives of coexistence, transforming Ras Beirut into a place of multiple habituses.

## CHAPTER 5

### NARRATIVES OF COEXISTENCE

#### Introduction

This chapter shifts focus from those coming to Ras Beirut to study or work at the College, to the small community who lived there before the College's establishment. As such it reverses the lens from Anglo-American missionary projections of Ras Beirut's future destiny to consider Ras Beirut's past remembered by its local community. Ras Beirut's local community, made up of primarily Orthodox Christians and Sunni Muslims, is founded on what they call "ta'ayoush" or coexistence. They regard their history of peaceful coexistence as the bedrock of Ras Beirut's exceptionalism in its association with open-mindedness and multi-confessionalism distinguishing it from other parts of Beirut, of Lebanon, and of the region. More difficult to determine is whether this belief in a timeless peaceful coexistence has always been held or whether it is an idealized projection of the present on the past.

Drawing on theoretical frameworks of memory studies and oral history, especially the writings of Pierre Nora, Maurice Halbwach, and Alessandro Portelli, this chapter examines the recurrence of these claims to the uniqueness of Ras Beirut in stories which describe a distant, and in many cases, mourned past. Far from being dismissed as an older generation's futile longing, however, these stories insist on local agency in the making of Ras Beirut. Furthermore, they function to preserve "what would otherwise be lost both mentally and materially."<sup>598</sup>

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<sup>598</sup> Crane, "Writing the Individual Back," 1372.

Many of the pre-war generation of Ras Beirut's Sunni Muslim and Orthodox Christian community recognize the founding of the SPC/AUB in Ras Beirut as momentous. At the same time, assertions of the pre-College community in the making of Ras Beirut abound. Such assertions include a timeless Muslim-Christian coexistence that persuaded missionaries to choose Ras Beirut as the site of their College. No missionary record substantiates this claim and Ras Beirut narrators eschew specificity inasmuch as their memories "resist correction by others."<sup>599</sup> But it is the very fallibility of their recollections, as oral historian Alessandro Portelli points out, that suggests deeper meanings and provides invaluable insights into "the interests of the tellers, and the dreams and desires beneath them."<sup>600</sup> Though told individually, these stories represent a collective memory, the term popularized by sociologist Maurice Halbwachs, to explain how "the individual calls recollections to mind by relying on the frameworks of social memory."<sup>601</sup> By repetition and self-perpetuation, Ras Beirut stories of exceptionalism, articulated here as narratives of coexistence, affirm a past remembered in common that accord unity to an older generation's sense of dislocation in the post-war present. These stories, moreover, represent the primacy of local agency challenging, however subtly, the Anglo-American missionary "discovery" of Ras Beirut, on the one hand, and any association with the Lebanese Civil War on the other. Furthermore, from the vantage point of the local Muslim-Christian community the view of Ras Beirut as a destination

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<sup>599</sup> David Lowenthal, "History and Memory," *The Public Historian* 19 2 (Spring 1997), 34.

<sup>600</sup> Portelli, *Death*, 2.

<sup>601</sup> Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, 182.

point recognized by external factors shifts to view it a place of origin born of local circumstance.

One of the most often mentioned Ras Beirut narratives of coexistence is el-Hajj Abdallah al-'Itani's story. Sometime in the 1940s, "Abu-Abed" al-'Itani, head of Ras Beirut's largest Sunni Muslim family, led a contingent of Ras Beirut family representatives, both Sunni Muslim and Orthodox Christian, to visit Lebanon's first Prime Minister Riad el-Solh on the occasion of the Eid el-Fitr holiday at the end of Ramadan. This most important Muslim holiday occasioned customary visits to the Prime Minister, the highest-ranking Sunni politician in the Lebanese confessional system (based on the 1943 National Pact whereby the Prime Minister is Sunni, the President is Maronite Christian, and the Speaker of the House is Shi'ite).<sup>602</sup> When Prime Minister el-Solh asked al-'Itani to present him with the list of needy families from Ras Beirut, the Prime Minister reacted with surprise when it included both Muslim and Christian names. He questioned the inclusion of Christian names on a Muslim feast and noted that Christian families usually received alms during their feast. Al-'Itani claimed that in Ras Beirut there was no distinction between whose feast was whose and that, "we celebrate together, we are happy together, and we cry together, like we hunger together and are satiated together; if it is not possible for you to provide for those on the list, then forget the whole list (*baleha*, in colloquial Lebanese dialect)." With tears in his eyes, the Prime Minister responded, "I wish all of Lebanon was like Ras Beirut."<sup>603</sup>

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<sup>602</sup> Kamal Salibi, *The Modern History of Lebanon* (New York: Caravan Books, 1965, 1977, 1993), Chapter 7 "Greater Lebanon," 151- 204; Trabulsi, *A History of Modern Lebanon*, 110.

<sup>603</sup> "Al-Hajj Abdallah Itani," in Rebeiz, 107.

Another trope in many Ras Beirut narratives of coexistence features a Christian or a Muslim mother who, unable to nurse her baby, takes it to her Muslim or Christian neighbor to be nursed thus establishing legitimately recognized relations, in Arabic *qaraba*, between families. The alleged prevalence of these “milk kinships” (*ikhwat al-rida’a*) between Muslim and Christian families of Ras Beirut epitomizes its claim to a unique harmonious coexistence as it simultaneously accords it almost mythical status. Told in the present, these stories evoke an idyllic shared past that despite the nostalgia cloaking their veracity embody the link between the “individual and the biography of groups or nations, between personal and collective memory.”<sup>604</sup> According to Michel de Certeau, stories are “spatial trajectories” that travel through time and “carry out a labor that constantly transforms places into spaces or spaces into places.”<sup>605</sup> As such Ras Beirut’s stories delineate a “practiced place,” or a *lieu* with an order, a direction, and a ground where Sunni Muslims and Orthodox Christians lived as “one family.”<sup>606</sup> Told in the fractious present these stories stretch back over the troubled waters of the Lebanese Civil War, to a secure certainty of place and a sense of belonging that perhaps explains why the memory of Ras Beirut is much stronger than its history. For as Pierre Nora notes “memory attaches itself to sites, whereas history attaches itself to events.”<sup>607</sup>

The most salient event that historicizes Ras Beirut’s narratives of a bygone coexistence is the Lebanese Civil War (1975 – 1990). In most simplistic terms the

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<sup>604</sup> Boym, xvi.

<sup>605</sup> Certeau, 115, 118.

<sup>606</sup> Ibid, 117. Ras Beirut described as “one family” in almost every interview conducted.

<sup>607</sup> Pierre Nora, “Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Memoire,” *Representations* 25 (Spring 1989), 22.

sectarian nature of the war, at times pitting Christians against Muslims, cast Ras Beirut's claim to exceptionalism in sharp relief. In the insistence on Ras Beirut as a place of harmonious coexistence, its narratives prop themselves up against the divisiveness of the war. The war's rupture of the past from the present shifted Ras Beirut narratives of coexistence from what Pierre Nora defines as *milieu de mémoire*, or real unconsciously lived environments, to *lieux de mémoire*, or self-conscious sites of memory preservation.<sup>608</sup> In this sense, Ras Beirut's narratives of coexistence are the reconstructions of "memory-individuals" who carry the memory to assert their own identity and relevance while ensuring a sense of continuity with the past.<sup>609</sup> As such, Ras Beirut's storytellers are the actual *lieux de memoire* in their capacity to connect the past to the present and slow down the "acceleration of history."<sup>610</sup>

### **Ras Beirut's "Memory Individuals:" Kamal Rebeiz and Kamal Salibi**

No reference to the memory of Ras Beirut can fail to mention *Mukhtar* Kamal Girgi Rebeiz. Arguably Ras Beirut's "memory-individual" par excellence, Rebeiz assigned himself the task of recording Ras Beirut's "truth" through popular memory in his widely acclaimed book entitled *Those Good ol'Days...oh Ras Beirut (Rizqallah 'a-haydeek al ayyam...ya Ras Bayrut)*.<sup>611</sup> As popularly elected *mukhtar* his official role as record keeper accorded him perhaps the greatest authenticity and accountability as Ras

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<sup>608</sup> Ibid, 7.

<sup>609</sup> Ibid, 16, 19.

<sup>610</sup> Ibid, 15.

<sup>611</sup> Rebeiz, 7.



Beirut chronicler.<sup>612</sup> Almost every oral history interview conducted for the research of this chapter began with asking me whether I had consulted his book. Clearly Rebeiz's local audience granted him legitimacy to be *the* "memory-individual" of Ras Beirut.<sup>613</sup> In fact, only one interviewee dismissed Rebeiz's book as unfounded in its attention to what she considered the lowly details of farmer's, fishermen's, and craftsmen's backgrounds. That this particular interviewee is the daughter of the wealthy mercantile families of the Ayyas and Da-'uq elite may explain her disdain for Rebeiz's focus that sidelines the upper classes who built grand houses in Ras Beirut, "turning it into a fashionable new suburb" in the late nineteenth century.<sup>614</sup>

The structure of Rebeiz's book unfolds in a folkloric, lively compilation of close to two hundred pages. He summarizes a history of Beirut through the ages in thirty pages, then a history of Ras Beirut before SPC's establishment in three pages, and then a history after the college's establishment in four pages, quoting extensively from Daniel Bliss's memoir *Reminiscences*. After this historical background, the bulk of his book is comprised of individual autobiographical and in some cases biographical sketches in random order, grouped under the heading "Families of Ras Beirut - Their Memories." As such his book serves as a veritable *catalogue raisonné* of voices long gone. He intersperses the text with photographs, mentions of a few Ras Beirut landmarks (the police station, Dumit Dairy, and Fayssal's restaurant), and includes a couple of add-on

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<sup>612</sup> As noted in Chapter One, *mukhtar* is roughly defined as a state functionary elected by the people of a district. Ras Beirut currently has six mukhtars: four Sunni Muslim, one Orthodox Christian, and one Druze.

<sup>613</sup> I met with approximately sixty interviewees from 2010 to 2013.

<sup>614</sup> Leila Da-'uq Idriss, interview with author, February 14, 2013. Kamal Salibi, "Beirut Under the Young Turks," 196.

sections subtitled “Their News” and “Peculiarities and Portraits.”<sup>615</sup> His collection of these memories, faces and places, some dated, others not, further underlines Rebeiz’s role as a “memory-individual” who turns memory into history or historicizes memory.<sup>616</sup>

Rebeiz’s collection of stories is a combination of those he heard first hand and those his father’s generation passed down. For example, he included the aforementioned account of el-Hajj Abdallah al-’Itani’s visit to Prime Minister el-Solh in al-’Itani’s biographical sketch where he describes al-’Itani as one of the pillars of Ras Beirut. If al-’Itani had not told Rebeiz the story himself, Rebeiz’s father, Girgi Nicola Rebeiz presumably did. *Mukhtar* of Ras Beirut from 1933-1979, Rebeiz’s father was a member of the Ras Beirut contingent who accompanied al-’Itani on his visit to Prime Minister el-Solh.<sup>617</sup> Rebeiz’s rendition of this story and many others in his book gives them iconic significance. Indeed, several narrators interviewed for this chapter repeated these very same stories in the context of their own lives and the lives of their parents. In some ways, Rebeiz’s stories work as photographs do to tether a memory to a certain place and in some cases to replace the actual memory with the memory of the photograph, or in this case, the story. Despite the difficulty of ascertaining the reliability of the interviewees’ memories being their own and not transplanted from Rebeiz’s book, their insistence on his book as *the* authoritative source on Ras Beirut makes it an invaluable repository of collective memory. As such its significance cannot be discounted in its confirmation of

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<sup>615</sup> Rebeiz, *Rizqallah*. Rebeiz followed with a second publication in 1996 entitled *Days of a Mukhtar* [*Yawmeeyat mukhtar*] (Beirut: Jami’a al-Huquq Mafoodah, 1996) which touches on many of the same themes.

<sup>616</sup> Nora, 15.

<sup>617</sup> al-’Itani lists Kamal Rebeiz’s father as part of the Ras Beirut delegation so presumably Kamal heard the story at least twice, 107.

the identity, the narrative, and the meaning Ras Beirut attach to Ras Beirut. The line between history and memory is often trickiest between the alleged objectivity of history and the subjectivity of memory and even more especially when memory gives importance to ordinary lives. Using oral history involves looking beyond the face value of the information shared through the interview process. For the extent to which stories are told accurately or not, does not determine whether or not they are true. As Portelli so convincingly demonstrates, oral history often reveals the deeper meanings and truths that lie underneath the surface of accuracy.<sup>618</sup>

Kamal Rebeiz had much at stake in writing about Ras Beirut. The Rebeiz family, one of Ras Beirut's oldest Orthodox Christian families, dates back at least five generations, long before the Arab Protestant families and before the arrival of the Anglo-American missionaries to Ras Beirut in the 1870s. Rebeiz grew up in his father's office and after his father's death succeeded him as *mukhtar* in 1980. He then served as *mukhtar*, a renewable six-year elected term, until his death in August 2009. His house, which included his office, remains one of the last stone houses with a red-tile roof, making it a local landmark reminiscent of what the street must have looked like a century ago. Its location on the corner of Makhoul and Jeanne d'Arc Streets, on the same street as the Orthodox Church and one block south of the American University of Beirut (AUB), placed it at the crossroads of Ras Beirut (Figure 44). Rebeiz was one of Ras Beirut's liveliest personalities, holding daily court in his crowded office, a beehive of constant activity.<sup>619</sup> Dressed in button-down oxford shirts and slacks, he sat behind a huge desk

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<sup>618</sup> Portelli, *Death*, 26.

piled high with stacks of paper and files and lines of official stamps. The walls behind him were covered with framed photographs, Arabic calligraphy, icons, swords, Lebanese flags, shelves of hundreds of compact discs, and other paraphernalia.<sup>620</sup> Chairs and side benches lined the walls for those who needed official papers processed – identity papers, birth, marriage, and death certificates – the bureaucracy of civil life. His job meant that he knew everyone and he relished telling stories and jokes, and contemplating classical music.

Rebeiz published the *Good ol' Days* in 1986 when the Lebanese Civil War (1975 – 1990) was in its eleventh year. Although Rebeiz is never explicit about the impact of the war on his writing, it is hard to imagine that it did not directly bear on it. In the forward to his book, he states that his purpose is not to be the expert on Ras Beirut in the present, but to record an “extinct truth no longer present” (*haqiqa anqaradat wa waaqa' zaal*).<sup>621</sup> To ensure that his memory and the memory of the Ras Beirut that existed before the war would survive not only the war, but also his own life, he collected stories based on his conversations with those of his father's generation and his own. Through these stories, in Arabic *hakaya*, Rebeiz documents the truth, *haqiqa*, and takes the “responsibility to recapture [memory] through individual means. The less memory is experienced collectively, the more it will require individuals to undertake to become

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<sup>619</sup> In Rebeiz's *Yawmeeya there are* several tributes to him as mukhtar. I visited his office several times for official papers and remember his warm welcome even though his office was always busy and full of people holding several conversations simultaneously.

<sup>620</sup> Hojeij's *Memories of Ras Beirut* captures Rebeiz's personality and the material culture of his office on film.

<sup>621</sup> Rebeiz, *Rizqallah*, 7.

themselves memory-individuals.”<sup>622</sup> He writes of the life that revolved around the seasons of sericulture, vegetable farming, and bird hunting, and of the tight cactus-edged alleyways that no longer exist. Though this tableau vivant of Ras Beirut is gone, its families (*ahl*) and their memories testify to the continued spirit of familiarity (*al-ilf*) and togetherness (*wi'am*) that the “recent painful happenings” (i.e., the war) have done nothing to change (*al-‘aysh al-mushtarak*).<sup>623</sup> Like Ghassan Tueni and Munir Shama‘a, Rebeiz insists that Ras Beirut’s distinct interconfessional harmony exempted it from the sectarian conflict of the Lebanese Civil War and that Ras Beirut was a “third Beirut,” part of neither “Muslim” West nor “Christian” East Beirut.<sup>624</sup>

While Kamal Rebeiz took on the role of the “memory-individual” in the popular realm, Kamal Salibi arguably played the same role in the scholarly one. Neither Rebeiz nor Salibi make any mention of each other in their respective Ras Beirut accounts, though they surely knew each other. Salibi, renowned historian of Lebanon and Protestant of Ras Beirut of the last chapter, viewed Ras Beirut from a more academic, but not less nostalgic angle. He never pursued Ras Beirut in his own scholarship, but his autobiographical writings repeatedly assert Ras Beirut’s exceptionalism. He writes,

In Ras Beirut, Muslim and Christian families were close friends, and their children normally attended the same schools and played together in the streets. This was as true among the rich and well-to-do as among the poor. The local lore regarding the relationships between the different religious communities differed sharply from the lore of the mountains. Among the oldest established Christian families, which were Greek Orthodox, the Aramans considered themselves relatives of the Muslim Shatilas, and the Bikh‘azis relatives of the Muslim ‘Itanis. The families in question, and others

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<sup>622</sup> Nora, 16.

<sup>623</sup> Rebeiz, *Rizqallah*, 7.

<sup>624</sup> Rebeiz quoted Hojeij, *Memories of Ras Beirut*.

like them, were actually unrelated by blood, because no intermarriages were possible between them. Foster kinship, however, was believed to serve as a replacement for blood kinship. Several Ras Beirut Muslim and Christian families, it was said, made a point of having their babies nurse, at least once, from the same breast, so that they became foster siblings. Consequently, the children grew up as brothers and sisters ‘of the milk’ (as the expression went). Muslim and Christian mothers exchanged babies at the breast to ensure that the foster relationship between their respective families continued. How many Aramans and Shatilas, Bikh‘azis and ‘Itanis, had actually been nursed as babies from the same breast was moot. The story existed, and it was believed.<sup>625</sup>

In his authoritative capacity as historian, Salibi gave credence to Rebeiz’s Ras Beirut narratives of exceptionalism. His sweeping overview of Ras Beirut complements Rebeiz’s collection of individual, dialogical accounts. Whereas Rebeiz renders Ras Beirut in a series of momentary encounters, Salibi accords Ras Beirut the weight of timeless lore. In one short paragraph Salibi contrasts Ras Beirut to the mountains, historicizes the Orthodox Christian-Sunni Muslim community, names the families, and attributes their harmonious coexistence to the ancient practice of milk kinship. Simply on the basis of his own remembered experience and his scholarly reputation Salibi grants Ras Beirut mythical stature.

Before delving further into the history of Ras Beirut’s community, one brief example illustrates Salibi’s claim that Ras Beirut was distinct, in this case, not from the mountain but from other parts of Beirut. In 1913, a member of one of Beirut’s most prominent Sunni Muslim families, Badr Dimashqiyya, married Protestant educator, writer, and feminist Julia Tu‘mi. This marriage caused a huge uproar in his family because Dimashkiyi divorced his first wife to marry a Christian woman. To avoid his family’s disapproval Dimashkiyi moved from his neighborhood of Musaytbeh to Ras

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<sup>625</sup> Salibi, “Living with Changing Times,” 169-170.

Beirut. There he rented a house on Bliss Street from his good friend and short-time mayor of Beirut, ‘Umar Da-‘uq, across from the college (Figure 45).<sup>626</sup> He chose Ras Beirut because of its interconfessional and multi-cultural mix compared to Musaytbeh and perhaps as Jens Hanssen suggests because it was “the city’s ‘blind-spot’ of family honor.”<sup>627</sup> Further, in Musaytbeh, “Julia Tu‘mi would have been the only unveiled woman in the area” as a Christian.<sup>628</sup> Thus before World War One, Ras Beirut had acquired a reputation for tolerance. While the diversity of SPC’s student body and the presence of the Anglo-American and local Protestant communities lends this reputation credence, the interconfessional mix of Ras Beirut’s Sunni Muslim and Orthodox Christian community was just as important. Unfortunately neither Rebeiz nor Salibi explore the origins of the Sunni Muslim and Orthodox Christian settlement of Ras Beirut.

### **Orthodox Christian and Sunni Muslim Ras Beirut Narratives of Origin**

Little in the way of any written records document the provenance of Ras Beirut’s local community. In the Spring of 1991, five years after Rebeiz published his book, Salibi

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<sup>626</sup> Former landmark on Bliss Street, the white house was torn down in the late 1990s, referred to as the Dimashqiyyi house; Sa‘ad Dabbous interview.

<sup>627</sup> Hanssen, “The Birth of an Education Quarter,” 162.

<sup>628</sup> Dimechkie, *Julia Tu‘mi Dimashqiyyi*, 53-54. Badr Dimeshqiyyi succeeded ‘Umar Da-‘uq as mayor of Beirut in 1922. ‘Umar Da-‘uq named Bliss Street in honor of SPC president Howard Sweetser Bliss and Da-‘uq palace is located on Badr Dimeshquiyyi Street. Even though Dimeshqiyyi’s friend Umar Da-ouq owned the house, it became the center of Julia’s famous salon for intellectuals and was known as the Dimeshqiyyi house until it was demolished in the 1990s. “‘Umar Da-‘uq was President of short-lived Sharifian government of Beirut in 1918, had been elected as a nationalist deputy to the Lebanese Parliament and served as President of the Makassad from 1933 to 1949. ‘Umar Da-‘uq was a gold, jewel, and clock merchant, and was President of the Municipality of Beirut so that the Ottoman vali handed over the government to him. He formed a provisional government of four Sunnis and three Christians. Government declared the city of Beirut for Husayn, Sharif of Mecca and King of the Hijaz. With the arrival of British troops a week later, the government was disbanded and Beirut placed under military rule. For more on ‘Umar Da-‘uq in Johnson, *Class*, 23, 52.

gave a graduate level seminar on the oral history of Ras Beirut at the AUB. He assigned each student to write a narrative of a particular family or a community history based solely on extensive interviews conducted with as many family or community members as possible.<sup>629</sup> The results, a series of final papers, were destroyed in November of 1991, one year after the end of the Civil War, when a car bomb felled AUB's College Hall that housed the History Department and obliterated any trace of Salibi's coursework in that pre-digital age.<sup>630</sup>

Today, twenty-two years later, piecing together the history of Ras Beirut's "original," that is to say, the pre-SPC, population is that much more difficult. Besides the Sunni Muslim and Orthodox Christian population, Ras Beirut included members of other sects: a small group of Maronite Christians and a larger number of Druze families. The circumstances under which each group came to Ras Beirut is not certain, though the Druze claim to be Ras Beirut's oldest inhabitants.

The Druze of Mount Lebanon were renowned warriors under the Mamluks in the 13<sup>th</sup> century. Legend has it that they were the tower guards of Beirut who defended the coast from any possible incursions from the Crusaders.<sup>631</sup> In his brief account of Ras Beirut before the SPC, Rebeiz refers to the area of the *Manara*, meaning the lighthouse, situated on most westerly bluff of Ras Beirut where the remains of a Crusader-era lookout tower stood. It was said that the fires from this tower, *burj*, signaled messages all

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<sup>629</sup> Suleiman Mourad, e-mail to author, June 5, 2013; Malek Sharif, e-mail to author, June 6, 2013. Both were members of Salibi's seminar and now teach at Smith College and AUB respectively.

<sup>630</sup> Kamal Salibi talk to University for Seniors' Ras Beirut seminar, interview, December 8, 2010.

<sup>631</sup> Fadi Chaker, "Druze Communities of Beirut," (Oxford 2004), Druze Heritage Foundation, [www.druzeheritage.org](http://www.druzeheritage.org).



the way to Damascus.<sup>632</sup> Though Rebeiz doesn't mention the Druze in particular, many refer to the coastal areas directly on the western and northern edges of Ras Beirut, including the *Manara*, as once owned by Druze emirs of the Talhouk family.<sup>633</sup> While relations between the Mamluks and the Druze were based on mutual cooperation and interest, the Ottomans attempt to dominate the Druze led to continuous friction between them. According to local lore, this played out in the context of Ras Beirut, whereby the Druze preferred to sell their land to Orthodox Christians to keep it from falling into the hands of their main competitors, Sunni Muslims. However, cadastral records go back only to 1928 making substantiation impossible.<sup>634</sup>

The Druze lived on the edges of Ras Beirut to the north at *'Ayn al-Mreisseh* and farther west along the coast at *Jal al-Bahr* (Terrace of the Sea). Their location down the steep ridge directly along the seacoast rendered them spatially peripheral to the Ras Beirut associated with the Sunni Muslim and Orthodox Christian community, which comprised "the formative elements of what was to become the indigenous urban community."<sup>635</sup> In the words of writer Munah el-Solh, the pairing of Sunni Muslims and Orthodox Christians was the backbone of Ras Beirut's social fabric.<sup>636</sup> Moreover, Ras Beirut did not fit the general description of Beirut as "divided into Muslim and Christian

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<sup>632</sup> Rebeiz, *Rizqallah*, 44.

<sup>633</sup> Fadlo Khawli interview; Akram Oud, interview with author, September 27, 2012; Kongstand and Khalaf, 107.

<sup>634</sup> Kongstadt and Khalaf, 107. Mukhtar Akram Oud interview. As a Druze mukhtar, he stressed historic friendly ties between Druze and Orthodox Christians compared to friction between Druze and Sunni Muslims especially in the context of Ottoman rule.

<sup>635</sup> Khalaf and Kongstand, 107.

<sup>636</sup> Munah al-Solh, "*Al-jami'a al-amerkiya al-lati nama min hawlaha ras bayrut wa tenawa' ahlawo, thuma amtadat khasunaha ila al-arab*" (The American university that grew around Ras Beirut's diversity, then spread across the Arab world) *Al-Hayat* (May 31, 1994).

quarters” roughly between west and east, each with distinct dialects and distinct dress; the Sunni qabadays, for example, wore “a traditional type of uniform...a fez (*tarbush*), moustache, a short cane, a cloth belt (*zunnar*) with a dagger and pistol pushed into it, and a pair of baggy trousers (*shirwal*) drawn in tight below the knee and weighted down with pebbles.”<sup>637</sup> In Ras Beirut, Sunni Muslims and Orthodox Christians were indistinguishable from each other, sharing the same dress, dialect, and lifeways, each respecting the religious holidays of the others.<sup>638</sup> For the most part, women of both religions veiled themselves in the streets such that they could not be told apart.<sup>639</sup> When Muslim and Christian families came to settle in Ras Beirut, however, is difficult to determine. Based on oral interviews and a few secondary sources, what follows is an attempt to sketch out a rough trajectory of the Orthodox Christian and the Sunni Muslim settlement of Ras Beirut.

### **The Greek Orthodox Christians of Ras Beirut:**

Among the oldest Orthodox Christian families of Ras Beirut, the Rebeiz, the Bekh‘azi, and the Gharzouzi, trace their origins to an area known as *Qurnet el-Rum*, or the Corner of the Romans, far north of Beirut under Maronite Christian control until the creation of the Ottoman province of Beirut in 1888.<sup>640</sup> These families had moved to

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<sup>637</sup> Johnson, *Class*, 18-20.

<sup>638</sup> Sa‘adeddine Ghalayini, interview with author, September 19, 2012.

<sup>639</sup> Victor Shibli, interview with author, November 11, 2012.

<sup>640</sup> *Rum* in Arabic, refers to their associations with Greek, not Roman. Greek or Byzantine Christians looked to Byzantium, Eastern Christianity (or Greek Orthodox) as their religious capital, which in Arabic was the new Rome hence their appellation as Roman. The *Maronites*, a sect established by Saint Maron, are Christians indigenous to Lebanon, who settled in the mountains of Lebanon to escape Byzantine persecution around the mid-5<sup>th</sup> century and who follow the rites of the Catholic Church and regard the Pope as their spiritual head.

*Qurnet el- Rum* from Hawran, southeast of Damascus, en route from Yemen, whence many of the Arab tribes came. Indeed, tales of migration from southern Arabia belong to the collective Arab memory irrespective of religion: whether Orthodox Christian, Maronite Christian, Sunni Muslim, Shiite Muslim, Alawite, or Druze.<sup>641</sup> In particular the story of the collapse of the Ma'rib Dam in Yemen in the 6<sup>th</sup> century figures prominently in the popular imagination of the Orthodox Christians as explaining the waves of tribal migrations north from Yemen to Syria. According to this account,

the dam was slowly eaten away by mice and finally collapsed, flooding large areas of that fertile land, and driving northwards, in search of new lands to cultivate, the townspeople and villagers of Yemen who in successive waves and over many decades moved into present-day Iraq and Syria.<sup>642</sup>

Among these many tribes were the Ghassanids, from whom many Arab Christians claim descent. The Byzantine emperor Justinian I (527-565) recognized the heads of the Ghassan tribe as client Arab kings to rule over Bilad al-Sham, the regions surrounding Damascus extending north, south and west to the coast, later known as Greater Syria.<sup>643</sup> According to local lore, as Islam spread northwards from the Arabian Peninsula, the Arab Christian Ghassanids allied with their fellow Arabs, the Muslim armies, and turned against Greek Byzantine rule.<sup>644</sup> Over the next several centuries, various families migrated out of Hawran to Palestine in the south, the Biqa' valley to the north, the

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<sup>641</sup> Kamal Salibi, "The Maronite Record," *A House of Many Mansions, The History of Lebanon Reconsidered* (London: I.B. Taurus, 1988), 89.

<sup>642</sup> Cecil Hourani, 2; Mukhtar Michel Bekh'azi interview.

<sup>643</sup> Salibi, *House*, 89.

<sup>644</sup> Cecil Hourani, 2.

Lebanon Mountains to the west, and in the case of the Greek Orthodox families of Ras Beirut, to *Qurnet el-Rum* in the northwest.

*Qurnet el-Rum* is made up of seven villages: Munsif, Bekh‘az, Jdayel, Shikhan, Gharzouz, Berbara, and Rihan. Each Ras Beirut Orthodox Christian family claims descent from at least one of the villages. Among the oldest and often mentioned of the Orthodox Christian families of Ras Beirut are the Rebeiz, the Bekh‘azi, the Berberi, and the Gharzouzi families. Before their settlement in these villages, their last names were not certain, but as they settled in Ras Beirut, they took the name of the village whence they came. So the Bekh‘azi family came from Bekh‘az; the Gharzouzi family came from Gharzouz, the Berberi family came from Berbara, and so on.<sup>645</sup> The Rebeiz family came from Munsif, but they were called Rebeiz after an ancestor named Elias who worked in the silk industry. He was known for his skill of sorting the silk into threads and knotting them into bunches in preparation for silk weaving.<sup>646</sup> In Arabic the word for this knotting is *rabatan* from which the name Rebeiz indirectly derives. When and why the Rebeiz moved to Ras Beirut is not known. Some say the wars between the Mamluks and the Ottomans in the sixteenth century caused upheaval and instability in the region, others point to the general tension between the Orthodox and Maronite Christians as causing their departure.<sup>647</sup>

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<sup>645</sup> Mukhtar Michel Bekh‘azi interview; Bahij Bekh‘azi, interview with author, September 27<sup>th</sup>, 2012; Fadlo Khawli interview; Saad Dabbous, interview with author, Dec. 18, 2010.

<sup>646</sup> Ahmad Abu Sa‘ad, “Rebeiz” entry, *Mu‘jama asma’ al-asaruwa al-ashkhas wa lahat min tarikh al-‘ailat* (Origins of names and people and the family history) (Beirut: Dar al-‘lim lil-malalin, 1997), 351.

<sup>647</sup> Michel Bekh‘azi interview.

The Bekh‘azi family, however, holds on to a particularly colorful age-old story to explain their departure from Bekh‘az for Ras Beirut. A young woman from the village of Bekh‘az fell in love with a man described by members of the family as an American of Syrian/Lebanese origin.<sup>648</sup> The family did not approve of this relationship, so the woman fled Bekh‘az and ran off with her lover. The village elders charged three young village men, “brothers,” to find their “sister.” They immediately set off down the coast following the trail, pointed out by onlookers, of the escaping couple from one town to the next. Hot on their heels, the men finally reached the port of Beirut only to learn that the couple had boarded the ship that had just set sail. Fearing the loss of their honor and too embarrassed to return to Bekh‘az empty-handed, the young men decided to stay in Beirut. One brother settled in the neighborhood of Achrafieh, the other two settled in Ras Beirut. From then on the family was known as Bekh‘azi – the family that came from Bekh‘az.<sup>649</sup>

### **The Sunni Muslims of Ras Beirut**

In the case of the Sunni Muslim community, their places of origin extend farther afield following the expansion of Islam in the 7<sup>th</sup> century. Some Sunni families, like the Idriss, claim to have come to Ras Beirut from Andalusia after the Spanish expulsion of the Moors in the 15<sup>th</sup> century. Others, like the Arakjis, claim to have come from what is today Turkey, while still others, like the Shehabs, claim to have come from Arabia with the seventh-century Arab conquerors. Like other families in Lebanon, many Sunni families have little sense of their specific family origins. Family names are constructed from the city or town that an earlier ancestor came from, such as Sidani from Sidon or Trabulsi from Tripoli; a skill practiced by the family such as Khayat derived from the

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<sup>648</sup> Michel Bekh‘azi interview. Bahij Bekh‘azi interview.

<sup>649</sup> Michel Bekh‘azi interview; Bahij Bekh‘azi interview.

word *khayet* to thread or sew as a tailor; or a particular trait or characteristic of an ancestor such as Bayhum which means ‘their father’ in reference to Husayn al-‘Itani, a rich merchant in the early nineteenth century. He acquired the name Bayhum because he had many children, but more specifically because he “was known as the ‘father’ of a loosely organized but large clientele in the local community.”<sup>650</sup> The Takkoush also claim descent from the el-Itani family, but the meaning of their name is either from a forefather with a habitual tic of blinking eyes, *ytaqtish*, or one that used to sell nuts and crush them, *yita’tiqo*.<sup>651</sup>

As far as can be determined, the oldest Sunni Muslim family that settled in Ras Beirut was the Hamra family that dated back to the Mamluk era. Salibi described them as a troublesome group of Persian origins who moved from the Biqa’ Valley to the old city of Beirut. They were kicked out of Beirut because of their Sufi practices and moved to Ras Beirut where they bought the stones of the ruined Church of our Savior to build a mosque in 1407.<sup>652</sup> Though the mosque is a nondescript concrete building today, it stands in the location of the original mosque a short block south of today’s Hamra Street. Ras Beirut is also known as Hamra after Hamra Street that runs through it, bearing the trace of this obscure Hamra tribe. Though no direct descendants remain in any significant number, many Ras Beirut Sunni Muslim families claim to be offshoots of the Hamra clan.<sup>653</sup> The al-‘Itani family, who trace their roots back in several directions to Yemen in

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<sup>650</sup> Mukhtar Abdul Bassit al-Itani, interview with author, September 24, 2012. Johnson, *Class*, 60.

<sup>651</sup> Ibrahim Takkoush, interview with author, September 17, 2012.

<sup>652</sup> Abed al Latif Mustafa Fakhouri, *Manzoul Beyrout* (Beirut: Jamie al Hokouk Mahfoudat lilMou’lif, 2003) 103.

<sup>653</sup> Kamal Salibi, talk to seminar.

the southeast, and to Damascus, and to Andalusia in the west, intermarried with the Hamra clan and became the biggest Sunni Muslim family in Beirut. In Ras Beirut, most al-‘Itanis were peasants and fishermen, while those in the neighborhood of al-Musaytbeh worked as day laborers and dockers at the port. As the family grew from the early nineteenth century on, branches split off into families now known as Bayhum, Hoss, Ghandur, and Jalloul to differentiate themselves from the lower status associated with the al-‘Itani clan. Another cluster of families from Ras Beirut also descended from the Hamra clan are the Kronfol, Sidani, Shatila, Labban, and Da-‘uq families.<sup>654</sup> In all cases, however, little is known as to when the first members of the families arrived and why they settled in Ras Beirut.

Mukhtar Moheiddine Shehab, Sunni mukhtar of Ras Beirut since 1995, traces the history of his family to the Quraysh clan of the Prophet Mohammed.<sup>655</sup> He explains that the Shehabs came to Beirut with the spread of Islam from Arabia in the 7<sup>th</sup> century under Caliph ‘Umar Khattab. ‘Umar’s policy to settle the tribes in areas conquered by the army determined the Shehab’s family spread all over Greater Syria. Those who settled in Beirut eventually set up outposts in Ras Beirut. Mukhtar Shehab’s description of his family’s assignment to protect Ras Beirut from pirates and other invaders recalls the narrative of the Druze sent to monitor and protect the coast from the Crusaders. Ras Beirut’s strategic position high above the sea made it ideal for military towers (*burj* in the singular, *abrajj* in plural) to protect Beirut. Each tower was named after the name of the

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<sup>654</sup> Abu-Sa‘ad, “al-‘Itani” entry. Michael Johnson estimates that by the early 1970s there were around 6,000 members according to the al-‘Itani Family Association, *Class*, 90.

<sup>655</sup> Today there are six mukhtars in Ras Beirut : One Orthodox, one Druze, and four Sunni Muslim. The Shehab name is also a prominent Christian family, most prominently the Shehab amirs of Mount Lebanon; Amir Bashir Shehab II, for example.

guard posted there, defining Ras Beirut's Sunni Muslim landscape. Among the towers were Burj Shehab, Burj Shatila, Burj Da-'uq, Burj Hamra, and Burj al-'Itani. Historian Hasan Hallaq describes Burj Shatila southwest of the lighthouse, in the *Manara* area of Ras Beirut, that according to a 1660 account by a European traveller was a tall tower manned from morning until night that sent signals to ships warning them of their approach to the land.<sup>656</sup> Shehab explains that over time these towers expanded into family complexes, with a mosque and school. The tower guards made their livelihood off the land as farmers and the sea as fishermen.<sup>657</sup> Interestingly, Hallaq lists towers of Orthodox Christian names, such as the Burj Rebeiz, located on present-day Hamra Street and the Burj Araman, near the AUB hospital, interspersed among the several Sunni towers.<sup>658</sup> Thus suggesting that in Ras Beirut Orthodox Christians had the same lifestyles and duties and were perhaps also contemporaneous with Sunni Muslims in their settlement of Ras Beirut.

### **Foundational Myths of Origin**

Ras Beirut's narratives of coexistence as written in memoirs and as told through oral history have no historical starting point. All, however, cite the Anglo-American missionary purchase of the first pieces of land there in the late 1860s as a tangible point of departure, which at the same time accords Ras Beirut an inherent sense of significance. Instead of viewing the presence of the SPC as having *made* Ras Beirut, these narratives

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<sup>656</sup> Hasan Hallaq, *Bāyruṭ al-mahrusāt fī 'ahd al-uthmani* (Beirut: Dar el Jami'at, 1987), 127. Shaheen Haffar mentions this traveler too.

<sup>657</sup> Mukhtar Moheiddine Shehab, interview with author, December 17, 2012.

<sup>658</sup> Hallaq, 127.



see the missionary choice of Ras Beirut as a priori testimony to its exceptionalism. In this way, Ras Beirut's myths of origin appropriate the missionary narrative. Four narrators, two Orthodox Christians and two Sunni Muslims, individually repeat similar versions of the story of the timeless coexistence characterizing Ras Beirut.

Munir Shamma'a opens his story of Ras Beirut with the question "Do you think the missionaries would have succeeded as much if they landed in Jounieh, Tripoli, or Saida (Sidon)?"<sup>659</sup> Answering his own question, he argues that the university would not have survived if it landed anywhere else. "It landed in the very area which can accept such diversification in education, culture and ethnicity."<sup>660</sup> Collapsing the past into the present, Shamma'a declared that Ras Beirut "is one of the fewest, rarest place in the world where in the same (apartment) building which is not a hotel, there's a Christian, a Muslim, a Druze, and a Shiite."<sup>661</sup>

According to Michel Bekh'azi, current Greek Orthodox mukhtar of Ras Beirut, the al-'Itani, Shatila, Bekh'azi, and Rebeiz families always lived together peacefully and all knew each other. In reference to the missionary choice of Ras Beirut he noted that, "when Daniel Bliss came and wanted to buy land to build his university, they asked him why he chose this area."<sup>662</sup> Bliss answered this question in his memoirs, writing "finally we saw the site where the College now stands and fell in love with it at sight, and

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<sup>659</sup> All these towns/cities are located on the coast like Ras Beirut; Jounieh is a predominantly Maronite Christian town whereas Tripoli to the north and Sidon to the south are predominantly Sunni Muslim towns.

<sup>660</sup> Shama'a interview.

<sup>661</sup> Shama'a interview.

<sup>662</sup> Michel Bekh'azi interview.

immediately decided that we had found the finest site in all Beirut if not it all Syria.”<sup>663</sup>

While Bekh‘azi’s account confirmed Bliss’s description of Ras Beirut’s wild jackals, he explained that Bliss’s chose Ras Beirut over other coastal towns like Byblos, Jounieh, and Saida because of “the families living together and they love each other and consider themselves related.”<sup>664</sup> Regardless of any practical reasons, whether real estate or topographical, Bekh‘azi insists that the special ties between Muslim and Christian families “related” by milk kinship were what brought the missionaries to Ras Beirut.

In Sleiman Bakhti and Moheiddine Shehab’s narratives, Ras Beirut’s origins are elevated to mythic proportions. Bakhti again asserts that the college would neither have lasted in Jounieh nor Tripoli because of their “one color” in reference to their homogeneous confessional makeup. He presented two stories that explain why the missionaries chose Ras Beirut. In the first, Bakhti tells the story that Daniel Bliss placed pieces of raw meat at specific locations in Beirut, to its south, east, and west, in Ras Beirut. After a week he returned to the locations and the only place where the meat stayed fresh was in Ras Beirut thus testifying to the health and cleanliness of its environment. There is no such record of any testing of Ras Beirut by the missionaries, indeed missionaries were fond of denigrating so-called oriental suspicions, but this origin myth is often told in the establishment of many an Arab city. For example, the founding of Baghdad in the 8<sup>th</sup> century is allegedly based on this same legend: Abbas, the founder of the Abbasid Dynasty, also placed meat in specific locations to ascertain the best

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<sup>663</sup> Bliss, *Reminiscences*, 190.

<sup>664</sup> Michel Bekh‘azi interview.

location for the city.<sup>665</sup> Bakhti's second story concerned Ras Beirut's people. He described them as peaceful, good, related through milk kinship, who stood together in happiness and sadness, and that they accepted the missionaries. Bakhti adds that not only were they accepting, but they saw their own opportunity in the presence of the college. Because the people of the old city of Beirut mocked the Ras Beirutis as "the people of the wilderness," the prospect of a college in their midst could only enhance their circumstances.<sup>666</sup>

In his account of Bliss's search for college sites, Moheiddine Shehab, current Sunni mukhtar of Ras Beirut, maintains that Bliss was actually chased away from the predominantly Christian areas – the Maronite Christians in Jounieh and Orthodox Christians of Achrafieh – in his attempt to establish a Protestant institution. When Bliss came to Ras Beirut, Shehab asserts that he recognized it as the same kind of place that he came from.<sup>667</sup> Likening it to the original colonies of the United States, Shehab explained that Ras Beirut comprised people from somewhere else, émigrés. He defined it as a "collection of people escaping from somewhere else. But instead of going to America, they came here." Bliss "came to a place where he saw people like the American immigrants (*muhajareen al Amerikan*) that first went to the U.S. from England. Ras Beirut was like America."<sup>668</sup> This is the "secret" of Ras Beirut's peacefulness and tolerance

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<sup>665</sup> Abu-Ja'afar Mansour with Sulieman Bakhti, conversation with author, December 21, 2012.

<sup>666</sup> Rebeiz, *Rizqallah*, 44. Mentions the children of the wild, *awlad al-Bariya*, and when they went to the city of Beirut they refer to the long distance travelled.

<sup>667</sup> Shehab interview.

<sup>668</sup> Ibid.

making it the ideal location for the SPC.<sup>669</sup> The Orthodox Christians came from areas where they faced persecution by Maronite Christians and the small number of Maronite Christians came from areas of Lebanon that were dominated by Orthodox. Combined with the few Druze families and Sunni Muslims who came from the city of Beirut, all found peace and lived off the land and sea. Recalling Shamma'a's apartment building analogy, Shehab added that there exists "no other place in Lebanon where an Orthodox, a Sunni, a Maronite, and a Druze can live peacefully together." In other Beirut quarters of mixed populations, Mazra'a and Musaytbeh, Shehab asserted there were always sectarian tensions. Moreover, even though the Druze owned ninety percent of the land, they did not inhabit it.<sup>670</sup> Shehab describes Ras Beirut as a "New Land," empty until Orthodox Christians and Muslims arrived like "America" as the New World. Moreover, when the SPC/AUB came it added "civilization" to a base that was literally fertile ground cultivated by the honest work of its farmers and fishermen.<sup>671</sup>

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<sup>669</sup> Shehab interview.

<sup>670</sup> This is corroborated to a certain extent by Leila Fawaz's explanation of the waves of people moving in and out of Beirut, such as when "the Druzes were also made to feel uncomfortable after the city was separated from the jurisdiction of Mount Lebanon in the late eighteenth century" and left. *Merchants*, 109.

<sup>671</sup> Mukhtar Moheiddine Shehab interview. Mukhtar Akram Oud, the Druze mukhtar of Ras Beirut, specifies that the American missionaries were already settled on buying a piece of land for the College in Ba'aba (up the hills overlooking Beirut). But Bliss convinced them to choose Ras Beirut instead. He frequented Ras Beirut regularly on horseback and through the process got to know the "good people of Ras Beirut and fell under its beautiful spell (*indahash fiha*)."

## **Ras Beirut's "One Family"**

### **Milk Kinship: *ikhwe bi-l-rida'a***

At the heart of Ras Beirut's claim to exceptionalism is the "milk kinship" between Muslim and Christian families. In Arabic the term *ikhwe bil rida'a*, meaning brothers or sisters by virtue of being nursed by the same woman, *rida'a* "denotes the relationship between a child and a woman, not its own mother, who nursed it."<sup>672</sup> That is, when babies of different mothers were nursed at the same breast, they were considered milk siblings. Kamal Rebeiz directly links the milk kinship between Christian and Muslims of Ras Beirut to the missionary choice of Ras Beirut as their college site. He writes that, "Girgi (George, standing for Christian) was the brother of Mohammed (standing for Muslim), and that is why when the foreign missionaries came, they chose it (Ras Beirut) above all other options."<sup>673</sup> Even though foster nursing is long since out of practice and despite the fact that milk kinships, even across confessional lines, were not limited to Ras Beirut, today the oft-made claim that Ras Beirut constituted "one big family" is underlined by the relationship of Sunni Muslims and Orthodox Christians as "brothers of the milk."

Rebeiz's book, *The Good Ol Days*, includes several accounts of milk kinship between Muslims and Christians. One of the more humorous stories is titled "Sami el-Solh Muslim Orthodox in Ras Beirut." The story goes that a Girgi, an Orthodox Christian of Ras Beirut, was accused of a misdemeanor involving pigeon flying, a popular hobby of the region. Sami el-Solh went to court to testify to Girgi's upstanding character and ended his testimony saying that, anyway, Girgi is my relative. The judge was convinced

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<sup>672</sup> Soraya Altorki, "Milk-Kinship in Arab Society: An Unexplored Problem in Ethnography of Marriage," *Ethnology* 19 2 (April 1980), 233.

<sup>673</sup> Rebeiz, *Rizqallah*, 45.

of Girgi's good behavior, but he still did not understand how Girgi was related to Sami. Sami replied, "Girgi is our brother in Ras Beirut. He is related to Abdel Wahab al-'Itani who is Sunni Muslim like me. This is something complicated if you do not know Ras Beirut. That is why I am a *Muslim Orthodox* in Ras Beirut."<sup>674</sup> More important than the fact that they were actually nursed by the same woman, then, was the belief that they were all related if not by blood then by milk.

While the institution of milk kinship predates Islam, it is codified in Islamic Law. According to the *Shari'a* there are three types of kinship: relationship by blood, by marriage, and by milk. The same marriage restrictions that apply to blood kinship apply to milk kinship, so that marriage is forbidden between children nursed by the same woman, extending to the children's siblings and biological parents.<sup>675</sup> The main difference between milk and blood kinship is that milk kin have no inheritance rights and milk parents have no responsibility to their milk children.<sup>676</sup> In some social and historical contexts, relations established through milk kinship, also known as fosterage, had cliental and tactical uses. Among its purposes were to forge ties of loyalty between different social classes when marriage was not viewed with favor, to allow the unveiling of women in front of men not related to them by blood or marriage (usually servants), and to seal

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<sup>674</sup> Rebeiz, *Rizqallah*, 167. *bek* is an honorific title to persons of notable status, roughly equivalent to *lord*. Sami bek al-Solh (1890-1968), cousin and brother-in-law of Riyad al-Solh, was a powerful member of the prominent al-Solh family who also served as Prime Minister, five times. Johnson, *Class*, 47-9.

<sup>675</sup> Jane Khatib-Chahidi, "Milk Kinship in Shi'ite Islamic Iran," *The Anthropology of Breast-Feeding; Natural Law of Social Construct*, ed. Vanessa Meher (Oxford/Providence: Berg Published Limited, 1992), pp. 109-132. Morgan Clarke, "The Modernity of Milk Kinship," *Social Anthropology* 15 3 (2007), 289-290.

<sup>676</sup> Khatib-Chahidi, 109.

strategic and sometimes commercial relations.<sup>677</sup> Though there are surely other examples, Jane Khatib-Chahidi cites the use of milk kinship in an interconfessional context in the nineteenth century in Georgia where “Christian Georgians would send a new born child to their Muslim trading partner in North Caucasia if the latter’s wife was known to be breast-feeding” and vice versa, in order to build long-lasting trust between key trading partners in “potential hostile areas.”<sup>678</sup>

No evidence suggests that milk kinship was used to deliberately forge relations between Muslims and Christians in Ras Beirut as much as Rebeiz and Salibi intimate, whereby every Christian Araman was related to a Muslim Shatila and every Christian Bekhazi was related to a Muslim al-’Itani, or that mothers exchanged babies to ensure Muslim-Christian affinity. Nevertheless, it is clear that women did nurse children of others for practical reasons such as lack of adequate milk, and that relations established through milk kinship were lifelong ones. In the simplest of terms, because the community of Christian and Muslim families lived side by side with each other on good terms and if a mother “didn’t have enough milk [...] her neighbor fed the baby.”<sup>679</sup>

In this context milk kinships between Muslim and Christian families were a practical outcome of the interconfessional nature of Ras Beirut’s demographics. Munir Shamma’a explained, “when I was born I was lactated by a Muslim because my mother

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<sup>677</sup> Khatib-Chahidi; Morgan Clarke; Soraya Altorki.

<sup>678</sup> Khatib-Chahidi, 112.

<sup>679</sup> Fadlo Khawli interview. Same mention made by Michel Bekh’azi; Mohieddine Shehab; Abdel-Bassit al-’Itani; Sa’ad Dabbous, October 18, 2010; Rashid Koleilat, December 17, 2010; Abu Khalil Yamut, October 5, 2012.

could not give me milk and I'm a Greek Orthodox Christian."<sup>680</sup> Sa'ad Da-'uq tells of his Christian neighbors who would leave their baby daughter with his mother to nurse all day and then return her at night fed and clean. "When my mother died, she (the grown daughter) cried so much as if she lost her own mother. There was no difference between Muslims and Christians – she was like my sister, I couldn't marry her."<sup>681</sup> And Philip Safar, the proprietor of the last of the original seven barber shops on Bliss Street, tells of his father's milk siblings from the Zantout family next to the university hospital. On his father's daily walk to work past the Zantout house, he yelled out, "good morning" and they would return the greeting to their "brother Elias because they were *ikhwe bil rida'a*."<sup>682</sup> Sofia Lababidi's father told her that all the Christian girls of Ras Beirut were her sisters, related by milk, as she was nursed at the Rebeiz family.<sup>683</sup> And Rashid Koleilat refers to his "uncles the Rebeiz and Bekhazi; I am a Sunni, but I was nursed by them."<sup>684</sup> Hayat Labban al-Nuwayri writes of her "brother" Kamal Rebeiz, clarifying that he was her cousin because her Muslim grandmother, Mariam Fattouh, nursed the children of the Christian Rebeiz, Bekh'azi, Gharzuzi, and Araman families at the same time as she nursed her own children.<sup>685</sup> She writes, "I will never forget the day my father died, the church bells of Ras Beirut rang in mourning from the moment we took his body from the

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<sup>680</sup> Shamma'a interview.

<sup>681</sup> Sa'ad "Abu-Adnan" Da'uq interview, September 24, 2012.

<sup>682</sup> Philip Safar interview.

<sup>683</sup> Rebeiz, *Rizqallah*, 138.

<sup>684</sup> Rashid Koleilat interview.

<sup>685</sup> Hayat Labban al-Nuwayri, *Ras Bayrut kama 'ariftaho* (Ras Beirut As I Knew It) (Beirut: al-shirka al-'alamiyya lilkitab, 2004), 20.



house all the way down Hamra Street until we reached Qantari (towards the Muslim cemetery).<sup>686</sup> Marouf Sidani (Muslim) nursed by Im-Beshara Bekh‘azi (Christian) referred to Im-Beshara’s sons, Beshara, Joseph, William, and Victor, as his Bekh‘azi brothers.<sup>687</sup> And Bahij Bekh‘azi of a different Bekh‘azi branch explains that the Sidani family nursed his father as a baby.<sup>688</sup> Ibrahim Takkoush, the florist on Jeanne d’Arc Street, summed it up saying, “no matter what they all lived together as one and when a woman had a baby but was unable to feed her child, she would take it to her neighbor, maybe a Christian neighbor, and she would nurse the baby. In no other part of Beirut or the region was there such a close contact between Muslims and Christians. That’s what made Ras Beirut such a good place because no one cared who you prayed to or how you prayed, just that you were a good neighbor.”<sup>689</sup>

Though no evidence of milk kinships among the Arab Protestants families has come to light, a couple of interesting cases of milk kinship involved the few Ras Beirut Maronite Christians families. The grandmother of Victor Rameh Shibli, from the Maronite Christian family and Ras Beirut’s lighthouse keepers since 1835, recalls the fame of his grandmother, Im-Ziki. Not only did she have ten children of her own, she

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<sup>686</sup> al-Nuwayri, 37.

<sup>687</sup> Rebeiz, *Rizqallah*, 140. The word *im* means mother, so Im-Beshara is the mother of Beshara. Abu means father and when placed in front of a personal name usually means father of, though it can also be used as a nickname for personal characteristics, such as *Abu-Abed* a popular jokester, or *Abu-Ali* a tough guy.

<sup>688</sup> Bahij Bekh‘azi interview.

<sup>689</sup> Ibrahim Takkoush interview, September 17, 2012.

was a famous mid-wife who also nursed several babies from the el-Itani, Sidani, and Shatila families. These families in turn nursed many Shibli babies.<sup>690</sup>

In Ali Dabbous's case he learned of his milk kinship as a grown man when he came home one day to find a woman dressed in black sitting with his mother in the living room. When the woman saw him she embraced him crying, "my son, my son." Ali's mother informed him that Mrs. (Sitt) Nabiha, the mother of Maron, was their (Maronite Christian) neighbor when Ali was a baby. Unbeknownst to Ali, Im-Maron nursed him when his mother fell ill for fifteen days. Years later, Ali became one of the first professional skiers in Lebanon and spent many months a year as a ski monitor at the winter resort in the Cedar Mountains, the heartland of Maronite Christianity. Apparently Ali was the only Muslim among the predominantly Maronite Christians ski monitors. When he told his Maronite friends his story about Im-Maron, "one of the guys said, 'oh, that explains why we feel so close to you because you have Maronite milk in you.'"<sup>691</sup> A congenial anecdote of little consequence perhaps, yet it conveys the long-held belief in "the transmission of the wet nurse's physical or moral qualities to the nursling [...and] creating enduring social ties other than those of birth."<sup>692</sup>

Kamal Salibi highlighted the mystique of the friendship between Gebran Bekh'azi, who ran a tiny, but famous sandwich shop on Bliss Street facing AUB, and Munir al-'Itani (Abu-Walid) who ran a small café a few blocks away. Gebran could not walk as he lost his leg to diabetes so every Sunday Abu-Walid would bring him by car to

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<sup>690</sup> Victor Shibli interview.

<sup>691</sup> Ali Dabbous, interview with author, May 15, 2011.

<sup>692</sup> Clarke, 287.

sit in his café for the day. Abu-Walid reserved the best place for him outside and if the weather was not good, then inside at the best table. Abu-Walid attended to Gebran's every need: preparing his water pipe, serving his coffee, and sitting down and talking with him "very, very gently like somebody talking to his grandfather." And then, Gebran died. Condolences for Gebran were not received at his home, but outside Abu-Walid's café and "the chief mourner was Abu-Walid." Salibi adds, "Now I was curious and asked, you know, suspecting it probably like the Shatila and Araman. And I understood that they were 'cousins' ...yes, milk siblings."<sup>693</sup>

### **Friends, Neighbors, and Intermarriage**

The al-'Itani-Bikh'azi story resonates with a number of other stories of close friendships between Christians and Muslims of Ras Beirut whether or not they were related by milk. One such legendary friendship and partnership that saw the opening of the iconic American restaurant Uncle Sam's on Bliss Street was between Muslim Misbah Shatila and Christian Sami Khoury. According to Rebeiz the two were inseparable and if you knew one, you knew the other.<sup>694</sup> Across the street from AUB, Uncle Sam's offered the first taste of Americana to Ras Beirut, serving American coffee, doughnuts, waffles, pancakes, apple pie, milk shakes, and hot dogs. Regarding the latter, the police tried to

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<sup>693</sup> Kamal Salibi talk to Ras Beirut Oral History Seminar, December 8, 2010. Part of Seminar I gave at the University for Seniors, Neighborhood Initiative Project, American University of Beirut. November 9-December 21, 2010 Using the term "cousin" is common to refer to anyone related to you, either by blood or milk, in this case. The general connotation is that you are related, *qaray'ib*.

<sup>694</sup> Rebeiz, *Rizqallah*, 169.

close the restaurant for serving dog meat, until Sami convinced them that it was an American type of sausage in a bread bun.<sup>695</sup>

Misbah Shatila's grandfather, also named Misbah Shatila shared a fishing boat with Orthodox Christian Nicola Araman until Shatila's death.<sup>696</sup> Abdel-Basit al-'Itani, Ras Beirut Sunni mukhtar, tells of Muslim and Christian neighboring shopkeepers. If one's shop received more customers than the other, the Muslim shopkeeper (or vice versa) pushed customers next door to ensure his neighbor had business.<sup>697</sup> Another oft-repeated story was told of Marouf Sidani who lay the ground, "threw the pebbles and sand," for the building of the Orthodox Church in 1860. On Fridays, the Muslim holy day, Sidani worked but refused money out of respect to Mother Mary in whose name the church was built. He claimed that our lady Mary is "for us and for you."<sup>698</sup> Michel Bekh'azi adds that Christians did the same for Muslims. When Khalil Shehab built the Shehab mosque, Christians donated money to help because it was the right thing to do.<sup>699</sup> When funeral processions passed by on Bliss Street, Philip Safar relates that everyone closed their shops and stood in front to pay respects to the dead whether Christian or Muslim. Then they would reopen. Safar remembers that his mother told him to keep his radio off for the forty-day mourning period out of respect for the death of a Muslim neighbor.

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<sup>695</sup> Nabil Ashkar, "Bliss Street," *AUB Bulletin* (May 1995) 27 2.

<sup>696</sup> Rebeiz, *Rizqallah*, 8; Kamal "Abu-Ziad" Shatila, interview with author, October 2, 2012.

<sup>697</sup> Abdel Bassit al-Itani interview.

<sup>698</sup> "Ma'rouf Sidani," in Rebeiz, *Rizqallah*, 140.

<sup>699</sup> Michel Bekh'azi interview.

And numerous stories tell of the strictness of Father Gebran of the Orthodox Christian school, now known as St. Mary's School, attached to the Orthodox Church. Father Gebran caught Mustafa, the son of the head of the local police Abdel Rahim Koleilat, hitting his classmate Elias Abu Samra. So Father Gebran punished Mustafa prohibited him from going home for lunch. Mustafa's father went to school to inquire after his son. When he found out that Father Gebran punished him for misbehavior, the father said, "keep him hanging until night, his meat is for you, his bones are for me. Hit him if you want, I want him to learn to be good, not a rascal."<sup>700</sup>

Strong bonds forged through milk kinship and friendship leads to the question of intermarriage. Though milk kinship precluded marriage, there were some marriages between Muslims and Christians, countering Salibi's claim that they were not possible because of religious restrictions. There were a few marriages between the Bekh'azi and the Sidani families and many members of the Shatila and Labban families were known to have married Christians.<sup>701</sup> Kamal Shatila explained that all of his maternal uncles of the Labban family married Christian women though not from Ras Beirut. One uncle married a woman from the Haddad family from the town of Aley, another uncle married a woman from a village near the town of Marjyoun, and yet another uncle married an Armenian woman. One particular uncle who married a Christian woman from the town of Damur, was said to have loved her so much that he died the day after she did. Kamal's cousin Misbah Shatila of Uncle Sam's married a Christian woman from Switzerland.<sup>702</sup>

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<sup>700</sup> Rebeiz, *Rizqallah*, 174.

<sup>701</sup> Michel Bekh'azi interview; Sa'ad Dabbous interview.

<sup>702</sup> Shatila interview.

Even so the story of Kamal Shatila's marriage to a Christian woman in the late 1950s is illustrative of the challenges faced by those of different religions wishing to marry. Kamal met his wife in Ras Beirut though she came from the village of Dhour Shweir. When he went to formally request her hand at her brother's house, they rejected him. So he and his wife eloped. Her family, the Abu Samra family, tracked Kamal down and took him to the Beirut police station accusing him of kidnapping their sister. Elopement in Arabic translates is *khatifeh* which literally means to be kidnapped or taken captive. In this meaning, Kamal's wife stepped forward and announced that she kidnapped him, not him her. So if they wanted to arrest anyone they should arrest her. Her brothers accepted the marriage and ever since send Kamal sweets for the Muslim Eid al Fitr and al Adha holidays and a yule log for Christmas from their fancy pastry shop in Ras Beirut.<sup>703</sup>

Clearly Ras Beirut narratives of coexistence were more commonly based on interconfessional milk kinship and friendship than on interconfessional marriage. Milk kinship ensured the close neighborly relations of a small, interconfessional community. Furthermore, it threatened the formal, contractual relations codified by religious law, both Christian and Muslim, involving marriage and inheritance.

### **Group Feeling: 'assabiyah**

The coexistence between Ras Beirut's Muslims and Christians also played out in stories of community solidarity in times of strife. In these stories Ras Beirut is especially set apart from other Beirut neighborhoods and the emphasis on the fraternity of the community fostered through milk kinship is again central. Mohammed Da-'uq explains that "Nadim Jaber's milk is Da-'uq. Although he nursed from the breast of my mother

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<sup>703</sup> Ibid.

and she is a Labban, the breast milk is affected by the ‘*asab* of the man (her husband).”<sup>704</sup>

The explanation for the male ‘*asab*, roughly translated as nerve or sinew, in the mother’s milk derives from the Arab saying that ‘the milk is from the man’ (*al-laban lil-fahl*).<sup>705</sup>

This extrapolation gives the husband credit for “instigating lactation” by impregnating his wife. The belief in the idea that the disposition of the “milk-father” is transmitted through the milk-mother lends further credence to the binding power of milk kinship in tight community formation.<sup>706</sup> Pushing this a step further from the individual to the collective, ‘*asab* is the root of ‘*asabiyyah*, which according to Ibn Khaldun, the 14<sup>th</sup> century Arab philosopher and historian, was the glue that held communities together. In this sense, the bonds forged through milk kinship bolstered the social cohesion of the community as manifested in Ras Beirut in the protective stance Muslims, in particular, adopted towards Christians.

At the same time, however, this fraternity based on milk kinship completely displaced the centrality and power of women and their milk. A child nursed by a woman, not his/her mother, is considered her milk child and her husband’s. Two children “each nursed by a different wife of the same man become his milk-children and milk-siblings to each other.”<sup>707</sup> The power structure of the family hierarchy explains the husband’s

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<sup>704</sup> “Mohammed Da‘uq,” in Rebeiz, *Rizqallah*, 83.

<sup>705</sup> Altorki, 243.

<sup>706</sup> Peter Parkes, “Milk Kinship in Islam. Substance, structure, and history,” *Social Anthropology* 13 3 (2005), 312. Aristotle and Galen held that uterine blood affected breastmilk connected through veins between the womb and the breasts. Fosterage, a term originally used specifically to denote the relationship established through feeding at the breast of someone other than the mother, was common practice in ancient Greece and Rome, medieval western Europe, Eurasia, and in the Hindu Kush up until the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

<sup>707</sup> Altorki, 234.

ownership of his wife's milk. In many cultures, not only Arab or Muslim, men assume familial role of determining "the quality and quantity of the food to be consumed by women and children and set the limits to the lactation period."<sup>708</sup> As such, a mother's milk is seen as part and parcel of family sustenance under the paternal authority. Seen in this light perhaps it is not so ironic that narratives of coexistence used the quintessential maternal act of nursing to legitimize the fraternal bonds and the patriarchy of the interconfessional community. The patriarchy undergirding Ras Beirut's narratives of coexistence, moreover, coheres with the defensive nature of Ras Beirut's mentality fostered by its exposed geography to guard the coast from the sea.

Ras Beirut's narratives of coexistence emphasize the interdependence of Ras Beirut's Muslims and Christians that was necessitated by both geographic distance from the fortified city of Beirut and by its vulnerability to incursions from the sea. Describing themselves as "the children of the wilderness" Ras Beirutis tell of the constant threat of raids by pirates from Cyprus, Greece, Malta and Libya.<sup>709</sup> The Rebeiz, the Bekh'azi, the al-'Itani, and Shehab, according to Michel Bekh'azi, banded together with whatever rudimentary weapons they had to fight to chase off invaders. They were accustomed to the physical labor of the land and the sea and knew every nook of the coast designated as family fishing spots. As such the Ras Beirut men, Muslims and Christians, were physically strong, generally referred to as *qabadays*, in the general meaning of strong, brave men – who worked together to protect each other.<sup>710</sup> In these constructions of an

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<sup>708</sup> Avner Giladi, "Breast-Feeding in Medieval Islamic Thought: a Preliminary Study of Legal and Medical Writings," *Journal of Family History* 23 107 (1998) (107-123) 108.

<sup>709</sup> Michel Bekh'azi interview; Oud interview; Shehab interview.



idealized heroic past where survival depended on the inherent trust fostered by milk kinship, the fraternity of Ras Beirut's inhabitants is paramount.

Philip Safar illustrates this solidarity in a vivid account of Muslim protection of Christians. In Ras Beirut, many Orthodox Christians were renowned builders, such as the father of Mukhtar Kamal Rubeiz, Giryus Rubeiz. One time at a worksite in Musaytbeh a quarrel broke out between a Christian of Ras Beirut and a Muslim from Mazra'a. At the end of the day, the Muslims from Mazra'a banded together to take revenge on the Christian of Ras Beirut. When the Muslims of Ras Beirut learned that this group was on its way to beat up the Christian, the al-Itanis, Sidanis, and Shatilas got together:

They stopped them and said not to take a step farther. The Mazra'a group was surprised and said, "What's it to you?" The Ras Beirut group said, "If you hit him [the Christian from Ras Beirut] it's as if you're hitting one of us – we are all friends and sons of this area." The Ras Beirut group did not let them in and sent them back to Mazra'a. This story my father told me and other elders that were my father's age. They didn't let them in period. They sent them back to their place."<sup>711</sup>

From the Ras Beirut perspective, the mixed communities of Mazra'a and Musaytbeh were charged with interconfessional tension. Bahij Bekh'azi explained that the Christians of Mazra'a liked to show off, flaunting their new big horse, for example. The Muslims reacted in turn leading to constant friction between them. In Christian or Muslim villages, Bekh'azi observed, the same kind of tension existed between peoples of the same religions, so tension was not always sectarian based but resulted from power contests of strength and one-upmanship. Even so, "I cannot remember from my father or grandfather

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<sup>710</sup> Michel Bekhazi interview. Johnson defines a *qabaday* as "a man of the people, a helper of the weak and the poor, a protector of the quarter and its inhabitants, and a communal champion," *Class*, 83.

<sup>711</sup> Philip Safar interview.

any problems with Muslim families. Not only us, but no one else. There was truly a brotherliness (*muta-akheen*)” between the Muslim and Christian families of Ras Beirut.<sup>712</sup>

While neither Safar nor Bekh‘azi specify dates, outbreaks of violence between Christians and Muslims in other parts of Beirut were common especially towards the late nineteenth century. In the earlier part of the century, Leila Fawaz emphasizes the history of “good will” between Muslims and Christians of Beirut as a whole and that intra-denominational outbreaks of violence were much more common as compared to interconfessional hostilities which occurred “only in time of political crisis.”<sup>713</sup> The increased European intervention and the impact of Ottoman reforms, which benefited Christians at the expense of Muslims, fueled the spike in sectarian tensions in the late nineteenth century. Muslim resentment built up with the increasingly pronounced military presence of western, mostly French, powers in Beirut so that by the turn of the century, Muslim-Christian violence was so common that “rarely did a week go by without an assassination, or a year without a riot.”<sup>714</sup>

One of the most brutal episodes occurred in September 1903 when a Muslim was shot in Mazra‘a and the next day a group of Muslims tried to ambush a group of Orthodox Christians coming out of a church in Musaytbeh. The ensuing fight between Muslim Sunnis of the al-Basta quarter and the Orthodox Christians of Musaytbeh exploded into a massive street battle with many casualties. Thousands of Christians fled

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<sup>712</sup> Bahij Bekhazi interview.

<sup>713</sup> Fawaz, *Merchants*, 107-109.

<sup>714</sup> *Ibid*, 115.

the city.<sup>715</sup> The intervention of Beiruti notables of the Muslim Bayhum and the Christian Sursuq families defused tensions between a “ragtag army of reputedly 4,000 Maronites” and groups of Muslims. Clashes between Muslims and Christians were also endemic during the French Mandate years. Indeed, political scientist, Michael Johnson observes that “living so close together, communal fighting between Beiruti Christians and Muslims seemed a fact of life.”<sup>716</sup>

In this light, Ras Beirut indeed presents an anomaly. The close ties between the Muslim and Christians of Ras Beirut, moreover, extended into the Lebanese Civil War (1975-1990), the most destructive incarnation of interconfessional violence. Simply put, the interconfessional harmony among the Christians and Muslims of Ras Beirut determined that “there was never any trouble, even in the last war here.”<sup>717</sup> Shehab’s use of the word “trouble” is just one of the many euphemisms Lebanese use to mean the sectarian violence of the Civil War. Salibi, writing in 1976, described the confessionally mixed Ras Beirut as “the safest part of the city, partly because it was geographically out of the way, and partly because of the traditional friendliness and courtesy which marked the relations between its Muslim and Christian inhabitants.”<sup>718</sup> And Johnson, writing in 1986, noted that confessional killings during the first years of the Civil War turned “East and West Beirut into Christian and Muslim ghettos. It was a source of some pride to the

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<sup>715</sup> Hanssen, *Fin de Siecle*, 205.

<sup>716</sup> Johnson, 19.

<sup>717</sup> Khawli interview.

<sup>718</sup> Kamal Salibi, *Crossroads to Civil War; Lebanon 1958-1976* (New York: Caravan Books, 1976) 137.

inhabitants of Ras Beirut [...] that this quarter remained confessionally mixed throughout the war.”<sup>719</sup>

Ras Beirut narratives of coexistence go farther to explain that not only was the population confessionally mixed, but that the Muslims safeguarded the Christians of the neighborhood. Ibrahim Dabbous, who attended church from time to time with his Christian friends, describes the Christians of Ras Beirut as “from us and of us” (*minna wa finna*). At the start of the war in 1975, Dabbous hired a place in a taxi from Damascus to Beirut. One of the other passengers happened to be from the Rebeiz family. When they were stopped at a checkpoint, Rebeiz was held for questioning. Even though he did not know him, Dabbous stayed behind and vouched on Rebeiz’s behalf, that he knew his family and that they were “good” Christians from Ras Beirut. A few hours later, Rebeiz was released and the two continued to Ras Beirut.<sup>720</sup>

During the war, four different militias kidnapped Victor Rameh Shibli, the lighthouse caretaker, on four separate occasions. His grandmother, Im-Zikki, was already a neighborhood legend. Besides nursing several children of Ras Beirut’s Sunni Muslim families, she was also known for an incident involving a couple of French soldiers, presumably at the time of French mandate rule. On her way home one evening past the Da-‘uq Mosque on Bliss Street she caught two French soldiers mocking the evening call to prayer. She slapped them, reprimanded them for defaming the words of God, and summarily reported them to the next-door police station, Makhfar Hobeish.<sup>721</sup> But

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<sup>719</sup> Johnson, 190.

<sup>720</sup> Ibrahim Dabbous, interview with author, May 12, 2011.

<sup>721</sup> Victor Shibli interview.

Shibli's Maronite Christianity and the strategic position of the lighthouse made him a prime target during the war. Three of the militias who kidnapped him were part of the leftist coalition, the Lebanese National Movement (LNM), who battled the rightist coalition, the Lebanese Front (LF), under Maronite Christian Phalange Party control. In the areas controlled by the LNM, including Ras Beirut, Shibli stood out. The first time Shibli's abductors were of the Druze Progressive Popular Socialist Party; the second time, the Murabitun (the Sunni Muslim Independent Nasserist Movement); the third time, another Nasserist Party; and the fourth time, the Shi'ite Amal Party in the mid-1980s. As soon as the word spread of his abduction, Shibli explained that his Ras Beirut contacts among the Muslims and the Druze secured his protection and release after no more than two or three hours.<sup>722</sup>

Rashid Koleilat gives perhaps a less dramatic story of interconfessional solidarity during the war. Like so many Ras Beirut apartment buildings, Christian and Muslim families lived together in the same building. In his eleven-story building, he and his Christian neighbor made a deal. If a Christian militia raided the building looking for Muslims, Koleilat would send his daughters to his Christian neighbor who would claim them as his daughters. And if a Muslim militia attacked looking for Christians, the Christian neighbor would send his daughters to Koleilat's house for safety as his daughters.<sup>723</sup> The Koleilat happened to have the same name as the leader of the Murabitun, one of most powerful Sunni militias, fighting the Christian Maronite Phalange Party, thereby making it all the more possible that his family would be a target.

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<sup>722</sup> Victor Shibli interview.

<sup>723</sup> Rashid Koleilat interview.

In Kolehlat's preparation for a worst-case scenario, his plan took on an interconfessional dimension that during the war became a Ras Beirut fact of life.

Mukhtar Mohieddine Shehab, who joined the Murabitun during the War, casts his actions in the historical precedence of the Sunni defense of Ras Beirut from invaders. Shehab cites the Italian bombardment of Beirut in 1912 as the last time the Ottomans rallied the Sunni Muslims of Ras Beirut to gather their arms from their respective towers (*abraji*) to defend the city. In 1975, he explains that the Muslims of Ras Beirut again resorted to arms, but this time because of the threat the Maronite Phalange Party posed. To that end, Sunni Muslims confronted the right-wing Christian militias who used "the ugly face of sectarianism to kill many Muslims." Shehab, however, adamantly differentiates these Phalange Christians from the Ras Beirut Christians. He explains,

The Christians of Ras Beirut were our brothers and we never even thought that they were "Christian". We didn't even consider the ones here as Christians, from our perspective they were part of *us*. And their church was our church. Makhoul Street Church is ours and Wardiyah Church too. The Shehab family actually sold the land to the builders of the Wardiyah Church and then helped them build it. We didn't carry guns against the Christians here, we considered them our family. But even to use the word "consider" is wrong, they *are* our family.<sup>724</sup>

Shehab's account of these first months of the Lebanese Civil War is borne out in some detail. In the fall of 1975, the Christian right militias, under the leadership of the Phalange Party, attacked west Beirut, including Ras Beirut, from the port area through the hotel district occupying the newly minted high-rise Holiday Inn Hotel. From that strategic point they bombarded and sniped at Ras Beirut but met fierce resistance from the Muslim militias, in particular Ibrahim Kolehlat's Murabitun. On December 6, 1975,

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<sup>724</sup> Shehab interview.

“Black Saturday,” Christian right-wing militias randomly rounded up hundreds of Muslims in the center of Beirut and massacred them in retaliation for the deaths of four Phalange militiamen, later attributed to the Communist Party. In the following days, the Marabitan unleashed raging gun battles against the Christian militias in what became known as the Hotel Wars. They routed the Christian militias out of the area and floor by floor in the Holiday Inn tower (Figure 46). In contradistinction to the Christian militias, the Muslim militias, the Marabitan in particular, “attempted to ensure the safety of Christian non-combatants during the offensive against the Phalange.”<sup>725</sup> And according to Salibi, “every possible measure was taken to secure the safety of unarmed Christians living in the Muslims sectors of Beirut.”<sup>726</sup>

Notwithstanding Muslim protection of Christians in Ras Beirut, a significant number of Christians did leave Ras Beirut as the Civil War extended over the next fifteen years. Elizabeth Picard notes that after the 1982 Israeli invasion of Lebanon and siege of West Beirut, including Ras Beirut, Christians left in droves so that by 1987 only 50,000 remained, a third of their number in 1977.<sup>727</sup> Theodor Hanf explains that between 1977 and 1982, most Christian “were left in peace” in west Beirut, especially in Hamra and Ras Beirut, but the Shi’ite uprisings in the fall of 1983 and their taking of Christian hostages, targeting businesses, institutions and churches, resulted in about 50,000 Christians leaving the area by the beginning of 1984. At the same time, Hanf notes that

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<sup>725</sup> Johnson, 183. Theodor Hanf, *Coexistence in Wartime Lebanon, Decline of a State Rise of a Nation*, translated by John Richardson (London: The Centre for Lebanese Studies in association with I.B. Tauris and Company, 1993), 209.

<sup>726</sup> Salibi, *Crossroads*, 147.

<sup>727</sup> Elizabeth Picard, *Lebanon: A Shattered Country; Myths and Realities of the Wars in Lebanon*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., trans. Franklin Philip, (New York, London: Holmes & Meier, 1988, 2002), 148.

Muslims also left West Beirut with about 100,000 moving to the Biqa' and the south of the country.<sup>728</sup> But the lack of exact statistics make it difficult to verify who left Ras Beirut and when.<sup>729</sup> Indeed, discussion of the events of the War was often too difficult to swallow as it shattered Lebanon's self-projection as a multi-sectarian democracy. Even naming the war a Civil War was taboo. The conflict was called "the events" or "the situation" but rarely Civil War, "for every combatant was convinced he was defending 'his' Lebanon from an outside threat, since the enemy was mentioned only obliquely, the goals presented with all kinds of detours, and explanations reduced to the claim of a 'plot.'"<sup>730</sup>

According to Mukhtar Bekh'azi, the Lebanese Civil War not only broke up the Muslim Christian community of Ras Beirut, it also broke up individual families. In reference to historical exoduses of the past, Bekh'azi argued that families moved together from Hawran to Qurnet al-Rum to Ras Beirut. But the 1975 War was much more dangerous because the larger extended family split up and moved to different places; "they left Ras Beirut, they didn't live with each other any longer."<sup>731</sup> In this sense, the Civil War perhaps more than any other event rent Ras Beirut from its exceptional past.

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<sup>728</sup> Hanf, 345-6.

<sup>729</sup> The question of population counts in Lebanon is contentious since the Lebanese political system is determined by the confessional representation of the population. The last official popular census conducted was the 1932 census; counts afterwards are estimates.

<sup>730</sup> Picard, 105.

<sup>731</sup> Michel Bekh'azi interview.



## Conclusion

Clearly the memory of Ras Beirut shared by its longest-standing inhabitants rested on the belief in their exceptional coexistence and unity. *Mukhtar* Rebeiz's claim that "even the sun in Ras Beirut was different" perhaps refers to colorful tale of the community's collective action against the sun.<sup>732</sup> Everyday Ras Beirutis rose at dawn to take their fresh farm produce (radish, parsley, mint, and lettuce) to market in the "city" to the east. As they pushed their carts downtown the rising sun blinded them. On their way back home to Ras Beirut in the west, the setting sun blinded them. So the story goes that they collected funds to raise a case with the Turkish (Ottoman) judge of Beirut against the sun.<sup>733</sup> After much deliberation, the judge reached the verdict that from now on Ras Beirutis would have to take their goods downtown before the sun rose and return home after the sun set.<sup>734</sup> Apparently Ras Beirutis were satisfied with this ruling, indicative of a time when life was much simpler and the only worry was the sun.

That most of Ras Beirut's narratives of coexistence date from the years of the Lebanese Civil War, in the shape of Rebeiz's book, or in the post-war era in memoirs, novels, a few newspaper articles, a documentary film, and oral history interviews speaks to the war's impact on Ras Beirut's pre-war generations. The brutality of the war filtered the pre-war memory leaving behind recollections that fueled a hopeful future for some. At the same time, the war to many Ras Beirutis, broke the past off forever from the

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<sup>732</sup> Hojeij, *Memories of Ras Beirut*.

<sup>733</sup> Some narrators name the Turkish governor, wali, others with the judge, qadi, depending on the teller.

<sup>734</sup> Mohmmammad al-'Itani, *Ashya' la tamout wa qusas ukhra* [*Some things never die and other stories*] (Beirut: dar al Farabi, 1987, 2013), 50-2; Philip Safar interview; Fadlo Khawli interview.

present and these stories are all that remain; as Mukhtar Shehab claims, “Ras Beirut is dead.”<sup>735</sup>

Writing the history of Beirut in the nineteenth century during the Lebanese Civil War in the twentieth century, Fawaz noted “it is difficult to assess the amount of hostility based on sectarianism in Beirut at the time, partly because recent events encourage the tendency to interpret the past exclusively in sectarian terms.”<sup>736</sup> By the same token, it is difficult to gauge the accuracy of the pre-war narratives of coexistence in Ras Beirut because, on the one hand, the rise of post-war sectarianism tends to cast the pre-war era in comparatively nonsectarian terms. On the other hand, these narratives of coexistence bestow upon the past the wishful thinking, or the wishful memory, of the present. For the idea of a golden-age past as more authentic than the inauthentic, deracinated present is a familiar nostalgic trope. At the same time, however, Ras Beirut’s narratives of coexistence of an idealized past, make it possible “to look forward to, and work for, an idealized future.”<sup>737</sup>

Whether or not Ras Beirut’s Muslim and Christian families were as tightly bound through milk kinship as their narrators convey is not as important as the belief in the solidarity of the community and how it portrayed them. Moreover, like the Anglo-American missionary educators writing letters to their families in the U.S. over vast geographies, the Muslim-Christian community tell stories that stretch over vast temporalities and use this space and time to create picture they want their readers or listeners to believe. For stories told carry deeper significances as Salibi recognized that

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<sup>735</sup> Shehab interview.

<sup>736</sup> Fawaz, 108.

<sup>737</sup> Johnson, 109.

milk kinship “served a good purpose: it provided an accepted basis of unity and solidarity for the confessional mixed community.”<sup>738</sup> Even more urgently perhaps, the belief in milk kinship among the Muslim and Christian families of Ras Beirut provided a palliative to deal with the brutality of the war in the post-war era and gave renewed meaning to the term “the land of milk and honey,” in Arabic *’ard al-laban wal-’asal*, in reference to a different place in time. Indeed the insistence on Ras Beirut’s exceptionalism in its narratives of coexistence “is not to transform the past, but to promote a commitment to the group by symbolizing its values and aspirations.”<sup>739</sup> Ras Beirut’s narratives of coexistence may mourn the loss of that idealized landscape, but they still function to recover Ras Beirut from post-war oblivion and contribute to the building “of a collective identity at the very moment when the groups they represent are dying or dead.”<sup>740</sup> As such, narratives of exceptionalism afford memory a history and create an image of Ras Beirut out of multiple and overlapping meaningful recollections.

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<sup>738</sup> Salibi, “Living with Changing Times,” 170.

<sup>739</sup> Barbara Mitzal, *Theories of Social Remembering* (Philadelphia: Open University Press, 2003), 51.

<sup>740</sup> Marianne Debouzy, “In Search of Working Class Memory: Some Questions and a Tentative Assessment,” *History and Anthropology* 2, no.2 (Oct. 1986): 278.

## CHAPTER 6

### CONCLUSION: NARRATIVES OF EXCEPTIONALISM

#### Introduction

This dissertation opens with Kamal Rebeiz's insistence on Ras Beirut's exceptionalism and closes with Kamal Salibi's imagination of it. In different but no less significant ways Rebeiz and Salibi are Ras Beirut's master narrators. Rebeiz, paragon of popular voice, represents the Muslim-Christian community of folkloric provenance and Salibi, sage of academic renown, personifies the historical deliberation of the Protestants of Ras Beirut. Presented as separate layers, their communities merge in the making of Ras Beirut. For communities are defined by locale, people living in a specific geographical place, or by a shared particular social identity, or a combination of the two as "a particular group's experience in a particular place."<sup>741</sup> In addition to people and place, a particular time creates community, in the case of Ras Beirut, the time before the Lebanese Civil War (1975 – 1990). Ras Beirut's communities are bound in place and time through memory, which depends on narrative as an "ordering, sense-making device at both the collective and individual level."<sup>742</sup>

Salibi's fixation on Ras Beirut is a perennial feature of his autobiographical narratives, written and oral.<sup>743</sup> In an informal talk Salibi gave to an oral history seminar I

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<sup>741</sup> Linda Shopes, "Oral History and the Study of Communities; problems, paradoxes, and possibilities," in *The Oral History Reader*, Robert Perks and Alistair Thomson, eds. London, New York: Routledge, 1998, 2006, (261-282), 261.

<sup>742</sup> Ronald J. Grele, "Oral History as Evidence," *Handbook of Oral History*, Thomas L. Charlton, Lois E. Myers, and Rebecca Sharless, eds. Lanham, MD: Altamira Press, 2006; (43-101) 68.

conducted for the research of this dissertation, he conjured up perhaps the most evocative picture of Ras Beirut.<sup>744</sup> Drawing freely on his imagination, Salibi's portrait exudes remarkable sensory and aural detail. After a short topographical sketch, Salibi defined pre-SPC/AUB Ras Beirut not as a village but as comprising "several little hamlets."<sup>745</sup> Each hamlet he painted a different color and gave a different tonality (Figure 47).

The first hamlet, Hamra, was named after "another troublesome clan from the Bika' Valley who moved into Beirut in the Mamluk period (1291-1517)." Apparently they practiced Sufi Islam and built "a charming little mosque...with a beautiful minaret with a little tent that protected the *muallem* so that if it's raining he wouldn't get drenched" while he gave the call to prayer. This Sunni Muslim hamlet extended down from present-day Hamra Street into an area of *zuqaqs*, or alleyways, to present-day Sidani Street. He described the area as made up of "little nooks with mulberry trees, beautiful roses and carnations and...a lot of cats, Ras Beirut people were famous for being cat lovers, and a lot of goldfinches, *ḥassūna*... and conversations between people who had cats and goldfinches, *ḥasāsīn*." This scene of flowers and sounds of birds chirping, cats meowing, and people chatting to Salibi is "in my dreams, the Ras Beirut that comes." This Ras Beirut existed before the widening of the streets, when the area had "no form" and people grew vegetables all the way past Sadat Street to the Pigeon Rocks.

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<sup>743</sup> Kamal Salibi, "Recollections of Lebanon in the 1940s and 1950s," *Bulletin of the Royal Institute for Inter-Faith Studies* 5, 2 (Autumn/Winter 2003): 117-135.

<sup>744</sup> Maria Bashshur Abunnasr, Ras Beirut Oral History Seminar, University for Seniors, Neighborhood Initiative Project, American University of Beirut. November 9-December 21, 2010.

<sup>745</sup> Salibi, talk to Seminar, Dec. 8, 2010. All subsequent details of Ras Beirut are from this talk.

Salibi then moved to the area of Caracas (allegedly named for the Lebanese immigrants who returned from Venezuela to settle there), where there were orange groves and where his friend and later famous musician, Toufiq Basha lived. Every Saturday night Salibi visited Basha and they practiced cello outside starting with Mozart's *Ein Kleine Nachtmusik*. Adding to this image, he recalled this "bit of Ras Beirut that was orange groves, but then beyond it you have the endless lettuce and cabbages and you can imagine this hillside that falls precipitously down to the Pigeon Rocks all covered with cauliflower."

From Caracas, Salibi moved back up the hill to Sadat Street. To the west he described a village called al-Qal'a, after the fort that originally stood there.<sup>746</sup> At that site was one of the most populous villages made up of industrious and imaginative people. To the southeast of al-Qal'a on the upper part of Sadat Street, Salibi explains were a collection of "ancient Islamic tombs" cut into the upper cliffs of Ras Beirut towards the Da'uq homes. Hence the name *sadat* after the Muslim descendants of the Prophet Mohammed who were buried in these tombs. When Ras Beirut was a military settlement, the presence of the tombs was said to encourage soldiers and keep their spirits high in the face of Byzantine or maritime attacks. Salibi learned "this story just before the last person who remembered it died" and that the road was first known as *darb al-sadat*, or the trail of the *sadat*. Every Thursday evening, on the eve of Friday prayers, the people of Beirut walked this path to visit the tombs and as they chanted their *zikk* (remembrance), the *sadat* rejoindered "from inside their tombs."

Finally Salibi ended his overview of Ras Beirut with the naming of Bliss Street by 'Umar Da'uq in November 1918 at the end of the First World War. He noted that one of

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<sup>746</sup> In the urban vernacular of Beirut, the Q is silent, so it would sound like al-'Al'a.

the first acts of the short-lived provisional government of Amir Faysal (the son of the Sharif Husayn of Mecca) before the French military occupation, was to name Bliss Street as the first street in all of Beirut. He then segued into the Anglo-American missionary presence to note their purchase of the land to build their College from the Druze Talhouk family. According to Salibi, this was not happenstance. Because the Talhouk's fief of Aley in the Shuf was adjacent to Abeih, where the Anglo-American missionaries established their seminary, the Talhouks "already knew the magic the missionaries could produce" and that the good schools bring. As such, their decision to sell of huge tracts of land at Ras Beirut to the Anglo-American missionary educators was a calculated one to ensure the education of their children and the larger community.

Whether or not Salibi's details are accurate is less important than the attention he, like Rebeiz, accorded to the proactive role locals played in the realization of the College and the making of Ras Beirut. Da'ud named Bliss Street in recognition of the missionary educators. The Talhouks sold their land to the missionaries. How much land they sold is not as important as the belief in their intention to secure their children's learning and not to make money. The making of Ras Beirut as College site depended on reciprocity and mutual goodwill; if not for the local appreciation of missionary efforts, the SPC/AUB would never have succeeded.

This emphasis on reciprocity, moreover, returns to the central question: did the Anglo-American missionaries choose Ras Beirut as a place already exceptional for its interconfessional community or did they make Ras Beirut exceptional with the founding of the College? The college on a hill came out of the missionary visions of exceptionalism whereas the golden era of harmonious coexistence came out of local

recollections of exceptionalism. How far forward does missionary imagination project and how far back does local memory extend in the making of Ras Beirut? An overview of population counts and the changing built environment perhaps can help to understand the growth of Ras Beirut and the College in relation to each other.

### **Population Estimates**

As a whole, Beirut's population increased exponentially from 10,000 in 1840, to 80,000 in 1880, to 120,000 in 1920, and to 180,000 in 1932, when the last official census was conducted (all later counts are estimates based on the 1932 census).<sup>747</sup> From the early nineteenth century when old city Beirut was still enclosed by walls, Christians settled in its eastern quarters and Muslims in its western ones. As the population expanded beyond the walls, Christians settled in the southeast whereas Muslims tended to settle in the southwest. With its extension further west on the Beirut peninsula, some purely Christian quarters emerged, but farthest west, Ras Beirut was "from the very beginning, Orthodox and Sunni, later more generally Christian and Muslim."<sup>748</sup> Indeed Theodor Hanf describes Beirut as a whole as a "segregated multi-ethnic city" except for,

one remarkable exception. In the west of the old city in the quarter [of...] Hamra and Ras Beirut, Christians, Muslims, Lebanese and foreigners lived together. It was a society of upper-middle strata and intellectuals that mixed socially, sent their children to the same schools, attended the same theatres and read and discussed the same books and periodicals, and occasionally even married across the confessional divide. For many Lebanese who knew it, life in this quarter was a paradigm for a future Lebanon.<sup>749</sup>

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<sup>747</sup> Hanf, *Coexistence*, 86; Fawaz, chapters 4 and 5.

<sup>748</sup> Michael Davie, "Demarcation Lines in Contemporary Beirut," in *Middle East and North Africa World Boundaries Volume 2*, eds. Clive H. Schofield and Richard N. Schofield (London, New York: Routledge, 1994), 39.



While Ras Beirut's interconfessional character is definite, its population numbers are ambiguous. Significant discrepancies exist, for example, in the figures for the 1920s and the 1940s. Per Kongstad and Samir Khalaf estimate that in 1876 Ras Beirut's population was about 300; in 1930 it was 1,500; in 1945 it was 2,400; and in 1967 it reached 14,801.<sup>750</sup> Significantly higher, Robert Saliba lists Ras Beirut's population in 1931 as 5,000.<sup>751</sup> Also much higher than Kongstad and Khalaf, Said Chehab Ed-Dine puts Ras Beirut's population in 1943 at 16,500.<sup>752</sup> Another estimate cites Ras Beirut's population in 1967 at about 24,000, almost 10,000 more than Kongstad and Khalaf.<sup>753</sup>

A more accurate reconstruction of Ras Beirut's population would be Kongstad and Khalaf's empirical study conducted in 1967-68 that identified two groups living in Ras Beirut: the floating, or transient, and the settled.<sup>754</sup> The transient group constituted a young, unmarried population, not surprising in a university context, who were thirty percent of the population of Ras Beirut. The settled group was defined as those living in Ras Beirut for more than fifteen years made up sixty-seven percent of the whole, among whom forty-two percent were born and lived in Ras Beirut their whole lives. This latter

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<sup>749</sup> Hanf, 201.

<sup>750</sup> Khalaf and Kongstad, *Hamra*, 112.

<sup>751</sup> Robert Saliba, *Beirut 1920-1940: Domestic architecture between Tradition and Modernity*, (Beirut: Order of Engineers and Architects, 1998), 13.

<sup>752</sup> Said Chehab ed-Dine, Said. *Geographic Humaine de Beyrouth* (PhD Diss. Faculty of Letters, Sorbonne, University of Paris, 1953), 207.

<sup>753</sup> Helmut Ruppert, *Beyrouth, Une Ville D'Orient Marquee par L'Occident*, translated from German into French by Eric Verdeil (Beirut: Centre d'Etudes de Recherches sur le Moyen-Orient Contemporain, 1999) 34.

<sup>754</sup> Kongstad and Khalaf, 105.

group gave Ras Beirut the character of an “urban village.”<sup>755</sup> The sample, moreover, breaks the religious distribution of the settled population into sixty-six percent Orthodox Christian, thirty-eight percent Sunni Muslim, and twenty-six percent Protestant, totaling seventy-eight percent of the settled population. Among the transient population, the Sunni Muslims represented the largest group by religion at forty-seven percent.<sup>756</sup> The proximity of work, school, market, worship, and leisure in Ras Beirut made it a self-sufficient area and with its mix of locals and foreigners distinguished it from other parts of the city.<sup>757</sup>

### **The Changing Built Environment**

One way to address the question of whether the Anglo-American missionaries chose Ras Beirut as a place already exceptional is to consider Ras Beirut’s spatial growth in relation to the College. In other words, to measure the extent to which the placement of the SPC/AUB determined Ras Beirut’s build up.

#### **Late Nineteenth Century up to 1946:**

Beirut grew out of the walls of a medieval Arab-Islamic town into a Mediterranean bourgeois city in four stages.<sup>758</sup> The area outside the walls of the old city went from farmland to garden suburbs beginning in 1860, to urbanized periphery beginning in 1880, and to urbanized districts in 1920, culminating in “the coalescence of

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<sup>755</sup> Ibid, 98.

<sup>756</sup> Ibid, 103-104.

<sup>757</sup> Ibid, 99-100.

<sup>758</sup> May Davie, *Beyrouth et ses Faubourgs*, chapters 1 and 2.

the peripheral districts” during the interwar years, from 1920 to 1940.<sup>759</sup> By all accounts Ras Beirut was the last of the city’s periphery to be urbanized because of its distance from the commercial center and port. According to an account from 1932, even though Ras Beirut was an attractive area to settle, and despite the 1909 tramline from city center to Bliss Street, the lack of commercial and transportation facilities “makes accessibility to faraway quarters impossible, except for those who have a car.”<sup>760</sup> Indeed, this inaccessibility is one of the reasons missionaries chose Ras Beirut: to keep a distance between their college and the perceived corruption of the city.

Like Ras Beirut’s inexact population figures, its cadastral records are also deficient. In fact, cadastral records were not kept until 1928-1930 and the dearth of specified dates of construction makes assigning dates to buildings before 1930 tentative.<sup>761</sup> For this reason the College buildings are extremely helpful temporal reference points when using maps to date surrounding developments. Specific information on when Ras Beirut’s cactus lanes were paved and named as streets is also spotty as Beirut’s Municipality records are incomplete.<sup>762</sup> As such, the following extrapolations are based on the observation and comparison of several historical maps and photographs.

Kongstad and Khalaf used Julius Loytved’s map of Beirut in 1876 to make their estimate of Ras Beirut’s population at three hundred based on their count of twenty-five

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<sup>759</sup> Saliba, 9-15.

<sup>760</sup> Saliba, 14; His translation from French from *Ville de Beyrouth Rapport d’Enquête et Justificatif*, Paris, La Société des Plans Régulateurs de Villes, Danger Frères, 1932, 10-11.

<sup>761</sup> Kongstad and Khalaf, 107. Saliba, 2.

<sup>762</sup> When I visited the municipality I was told that the specific data for this information was destroyed during the War. Only available information pertained to postwar period.

to thirty farmhouses and larger villas.<sup>763</sup> While the map indicates College Hall and the Medical Building on the SPC campus, it shows neither Dodge Hall nor the Observatory, both of which were built before 1874. Thus Loytved's map as a record of the built environment is not entirely reliable. It does show the paths that would become Bliss and Hamra Streets along its east west axis, and Sadat Street on its north-south axis. Otherwise, the space in between is undefined by indeterminate pathways. Clusters of buildings mark the Bliss Street area and the area farther to the southeast towards Hamra Street.

Three French military maps, however, show the most significant transformation of Ras Beirut from 1888 until 1936. The first is dated 1888 and is a French Navy hydrographic map (Figure 48). It shows at least one hundred smaller houses in addition to the SPC buildings and clusters of buildings around the southern end of Sadat and towards the eastern end of Hamra Streets. Bliss Street appears to be paved, until it reaches College Hall. Hamra Street is a dotted line extending almost down to the seaside road and Sadat Street is a bold line indicating a more established pathway up the hill around the alleged tombs of the *sadat*.

The second map, coinciding with start of French mandate rule in 1920, is a map specifically of Ras Beirut which shows significantly more detail (Figure 49). In this map, the dots of farmhouses and larger structures have notably increased. Bliss Street, though marked as Rue de Phare (Lighthouse Street), is outlined all the way down to the lighthouse, as is Sadat Street, and the Corniche, or seaside road. The build up around SPC, especially along the stretch of Bliss Street from Abdul Aziz until Jeanne d'Arc in

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<sup>763</sup> Kongstad and Khalaf, 107, 112. Loytved was the Danish vice-consul and he dedicated this map to Ottoman Sultan Abdul-Hamid II in 1876.

front of College Hall is most dense. Hamra Street remains a dotted line, albeit an outlined one, as do Jeanne D'Arc and Abdul Aziz Streets. In between these streets, meandering pathways predominate though an emerging checkerboard pattern is discernable. The Hamra and Da-'uq mosques and the Orthodox St. Mary's Church are marked. Clearly, this period represents the first signs of Beirut's urban push to the periphery with the "tentacles" of the Corniche, Bliss, and Madame Curie Streets bringing the sea of Ras Beirut within reach of the city.<sup>764</sup>

The third map dates from 1936 and gives not only clear documentation of the built-up environment but also the vegetation, depicting the built versus green spots of Ras Beirut (Figure 50). In this map, the Corniche, Bliss, Abdul Aziz, Jeanne D'Arc, Sadat, and Hamra Streets are clearly demarcated and labeled. The buildings are colored red and the green areas green, further differentiated as gardens, orchards, tree-lined and cactus-lined hedges, and conifers, cypress, and palm trees. The most built-up area spreads south from the university with a clear concentration of buildings in between Sadat, Jeanne D'Arc and Abdul Aziz Streets, where most of the Protestants of Ras Beirut settled. For the most part, houses line the streets and the gardens and orchards are behind the buildings in the center of the emerging blocks. To the east of Abdul Aziz Street and to the west around Miss Amineh's School towards Sadat Street, significant patches of orchards and tree-lined hedges remain. Farthest west of Sadat Street toward the sea are several rows of cactus-lined hedges.

A series of aerial photographs taken by the French military in 1938, however, affords the clearest bird's-eye view of Ras Beirut's built up environment in relation to the

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<sup>764</sup> Chehabe ed-Dine, 224.

College. In no uncertain terms, the three-dimensionality of Ras Beirut's townscape takes on a concrete tangibility in these photographs. Not only do they confirm the huge scale of the College buildings with respect to the surrounding buildings of Ras Beirut, but they clearly show the critical massing of the College buildings and the built-up areas and streets radiating out from it. From this period until the 1950s, the area between Bliss and Hamra Streets was the most densely settled area of Ras Beirut. South of Hamra Street the buildings peter out into scattered clusters of farmhouses and gardens as the streets revert back into pathways.

Furthermore, these photographs depict Ras Beirut's architecture. The flat-roofed one-story farmhouses surrounded by small garden plots predominate the areas closest to the sea and away from the College. Several two-to-three-story suburban sandstone villas with red-tiled roofs stand along Bliss, Abdul-Aziz, and Jeanne D'Arc Streets such as the Anglo-American missionary Post House, Dorman House, and the wealthy Muslim Ayass-Da-'uq House visible in the first photograph (Figure 51). The second photograph taken from the north, shows the impact of the availability of reinforced concrete in the 1920s and 1930s coupled with the urgent housing demand that saw the proliferation of four-and five-story "walk-up apartment blocks" (Figure 52).<sup>765</sup> The floor plans of the walk-ups were an extension of the single-story central hall plan, their height made possible by the "use of reinforced concrete frames consisting of columns, drop beams and slabs."<sup>766</sup> In the central hall plan, which had become popular in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the living and

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<sup>765</sup> Saliba, 13, 57. Sarkis and Khalaf, "Chronology of Beirut's urban history 1830-present," in *Recovering Beirut: Urban Design and Postwar Reconstruction*, Samir Khalaf and Philip S. Khoury, eds (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1993), 249-251.

<sup>766</sup> Friedrich Ragette, *Architecture in Lebanon, The Lebanese House During the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> Centuries*. (Beirut: American University of Beirut, 1974), 190.

reception room (the public space) was the central circulation space that gave access to all the surrounding rooms; kitchen and bathroom on one side and bedrooms on the other.<sup>767</sup> From the late nineteenth century until the end of World War II, this plan described Ras Beirut's domestic interiors. Mansur Jurdak's six-story building on the corner of Sadat and Sidani Street perfectly exemplifies the multi-story building of a central hall plan and is one of the few still-standing testimonies of that era in Ras Beirut (Figure 53).

### **The 1940s to the 1970s**

Probably the most significant change in the shape of Ras Beirut's built environment before the outbreak of the Civil War in 1975 resulted from the influx of an urban middle class of Palestinian refugees following the creation of the state of Israel in 1948. Their move to Ras Beirut marked a turning point in its growth, no longer determined primarily by the presence of the College. The late Assem Salaam, former president of the Order of Engineers and Architects, went as far as describing Ras Beirut as a virgin green area without a dense population before 1948. After 1948, Ras Beirut outgrew AUB, especially in the urbanization of Hamra Street. Salaam cites two reasons for this growth: First, "the neutralization of the main competing port of Haifa" saw a huge boom in Beirut's economy that the old city center could not accommodate in spatial terms.<sup>768</sup> Second, the English-speaking, educated, business-savvy Palestinian bourgeoisie based their commercial enterprise in Ras Beirut.<sup>769</sup>

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<sup>767</sup> Ragette, 189. Akram Khater, *Inventing Home: Emigration, Gender, and the Middle Class in Lebanon, 1870-1920* (Berkeley, Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2001), 121-123,

<sup>768</sup> Assem Salaam, "The Role of Government in Shaping the Built Environment," in *Projecting Beirut: Episodes in the Construction and Reconstruction of a Modern City*, eds. Peter G. Rowe and Hashim Sarkis (Munich, London, New York: Prestel-Verlag, 1998) (p. 122-139), 123.

<sup>769</sup> Assem Salaam interview, March 1<sup>st</sup>, 2011.

Indeed, Palestinians are credited with the almost overnight transformation of Hamra Street into a major commercial hub of Beirut in the 1950s and 1960s. No longer the periphery, Ras Beirut now replaced the center as the “*nouveau centre ancien*.”<sup>770</sup> The Palestinians “acted as catalytic agents in both breaking up the suburban and communal character of the indigenous population and introducing new modes of social behavior and standards of conduct.”<sup>771</sup> Salibi described the resultant change on Hamra Street as most noticeable in that “most of the old vegetable gardens lined with cactus hedges had already disappeared to make way for the new buildings, the largest of them being the Trans-Arabian Pipeline Company or the TAPline building at the juncture of Hamra and Abdul Aziz.”<sup>772</sup> Meant to terminate in Haifa, the oil pipeline was diverted to Sidon in Lebanon and the company’s headquarters to Beirut because of the growing tensions between British military and independence movements in the years prior to the establishment of the state of Israel.<sup>773</sup> The Palestinians founded successful banking and insurance enterprises headquartered in Ras Beirut, such as Intra Bank and the Arabia Insurance Company. They also opened the “nicest shops” and for the first time “you had tailors as good as the Armenian tailors.”<sup>774</sup> Many came to Ras Beirut because they could find work at AUB or at American corporations such as TAPline on account of their excellent English. Because AUB graduates did not aspire to such clerical jobs, “here was a market

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<sup>770</sup> Guillaume Boudisseau, “Hamra: Nouveau Centre Ancien,” in *Beyrouth, Grand Beyrouth*, edited by Jean-Luc Arnaud (Beirut: l’Ifapo Press, 1996), 66-80.

<sup>771</sup> Kongstad & Khalaf, 113.

<sup>772</sup> Salibi, “Recollections of the 1940s and 1950s,” 124.

<sup>773</sup> Borre Ludvigsen, “Tapline,” *Al-Mashriq: The Levant. Cultural Riches from the countries of the Eastern Mediterranean*, website: <http://almashriq.hiof.no/lebanon/300/380/388/tapline/>

<sup>774</sup> Salibi talk, Dec. 2010.



for all these bright Palestinians...at one time all the secretaries of AUB were Palestinian.”<sup>775</sup> While the Palestinian influx met some local resentment from those who considered that they corrupted Ras Beirut’s urban village mentality by turning it into an anonymous city, for the most part the Palestinians were well received.<sup>776</sup> Unlike their Sunni Muslim counterparts, many Orthodox Christian Palestinians were granted Lebanese citizenship; they bolstered Ras Beirut’s Greek Orthodox numbers and as such experienced the smoothest integration.<sup>777</sup>

The English-language orientation of the Palestinian middle class further enhanced Ras Beirut’s Anglo-American association in architectural terms. By 1953, Ras Beirut was described as the “new quarter” with American-style buildings for commerce and entertainment.<sup>778</sup> Buildings designed in the International Style of Le Corbusier began to overtake the walk-up apartment blocks that characterized the inter-war period. The introduction of elevators after World War II meant that buildings rose significantly higher. “The increasing preference for privacy as opposed to togetherness” led to the replacement of the central hall scheme in favor of floor plans that clearly separated living, bedroom, and service areas.<sup>779</sup>

On the lot where Laurens Seelye’s house once stood, the Murr Office Building, later popularized as the Horseshoe Building, was built in 1958. It epitomized the commercial architecture that would characterize Hamra Street and was the “first curtain

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<sup>775</sup> Ibid.

<sup>776</sup> Ra’if Nassif, interview with author, November 25, 2010.

<sup>777</sup> Fadlo Khawli interview; Salibi talk, December 2010.

<sup>778</sup> Chehabe ed-Dine, 264-5.

<sup>779</sup> Ragette, 190.

wall building in Beirut.”<sup>780</sup> The Central Bank of Lebanon, inaugurated in 1964, also on Hamra Street was “a sober monolith clad with marble and equipped with marble sheets acting as sunscreens.”<sup>781</sup> Together, the Horseshoe, the Central Bank, and the Cinema al-Hamra buildings articulated a new urban fabric in their representation of the “first effort in Beirut to define a street wall with modern buildings”(Figure 54).<sup>782</sup>

This period also saw Ras Beirut’s transformation into a place of leisure and entertainment with the openings of cinemas, cafes, hotels, and beaches, most prominently the Horseshoe Café, the Café de Paris and the Modca Cafe on Hamra Street; the Riviera Hotel on the Corniche (1950), the Bristol Hotel (1951) above Hamra Street, and the Mayflower Hotel (1957) on Jeanne D’Arc Street in the heart of Ras Beirut. Down the hill on the sea in front of the lighthouse were the Sporting and Long Beach Clubs. At the same time, Ras Beirut’s bookstores were almost as numerous as its cafes. On Bliss Street, Khayat’s Book and Publishing Company and the Ras Beirut Bookstore opened in 1949. In spite of its commercial glitz, Ras Beirut kept its intellectual, liberal character, most frequently on display at Uncle Sam’s and Fayssals’ Restaurants on Bliss Street across from AUB.<sup>783</sup>

According to a 1962 map, most of Ras Beirut’s streets opened up into a decipherable grid pattern by then (Figure 55). An aerial photograph taken in the early

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<sup>780</sup> George Joseph Arbid, *Practicing Modernism in Beirut; Architecture in Lebanon, 1946-1970*, (Doctor of Design Thesis, Harvard University, 2002) 120.

<sup>781</sup> Arbid, 47.

<sup>782</sup> Jad Tabit, “From Colonial Style to Regional Revivalism: Modern Architecture in Lebanon and the Problem of Cultural Identity,” in *Projecting Beirut: Episodes in the Construction and Reconstruction of a Modern City*, eds. Peter G. Rowe and Hashim Sarkis (Munich, London, New York: Prestel-Verlag, 1998), 92.

<sup>783</sup> Kassir, *Beirut*, 390.

1960s shows Ras Beirut's rising skyline with ever-increasing number of high-rise buildings that allowed several apartments per floor. According to Salaam, the resulting shift from individual houses and three-to-four story buildings to ten floors disturbed the social fabric of Ras Beirut.<sup>784</sup> Indeed, by then "more buildings were designed by civil engineers than by architects" and any measures to restrict the damage caused by rampant development were dismissed as "municipalities took pleasure in collecting taxes from real estate development and were kept busy creating the urgently needed infrastructure."<sup>785</sup> The Beirut Municipality's land-use laws allowed for the extremely high ratio of built-up area to lot size, so that urban development did not account for parking and green space. A 1972 aerial photograph shows the impact of the post-World War II boom, in the spread of concrete eating up the last vestiges of Ras Beirut's green space, the sole preserve of the university campus (Figure 56).

Perhaps a photograph Victor Shibli still keeps in his lighthouse best encapsulates the transformation of Ras Beirut from urban village to city in the post-World War II era. It depicts a time when the old and the new coexisted. Here, the old brick lighthouse, built in the 1830s, stands in front of the almost complete new concrete lighthouse in 1956-1957 (Figure 57). The sense of imminent destruction of the old, and soon to be forgotten, stands for the dizzying intensity of the urbanization Beirut, and of Ras Beirut in particular. In 1958, Kamal Salibi travelled to London on research. When he returned he found that "the old Ras Beirut vanished overnight" as the networks of meandering *zuqaqs* were obliterated by the straight streets of Ras Beirut's new grid.<sup>786</sup> Clearly that grid,

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<sup>784</sup> Salaam interview.

<sup>785</sup> Ragette, 193.

especially along the east-west axis of Bliss Street, was catalyzed by the spatial placement of the College. The College shaped the direction of Ras Beirut's urban growth up to the mid-twentieth century. However, from the 1950s on multiple forces outside of AUB's sphere shaped Ras Beirut.

### **During the War**

From its inception at the beginning of the Civil War in April 1975, a "Green Line" that ran north to south divided Beirut into Christian East and Muslim West Beirut. The first stage of the war, from 1975-6, saw some of the bloodiest interconfessional clashes and "created most of the homogeneous zones that are still in place."<sup>787</sup> According to Hanf, 115,000 Muslims were forced to leave East Beirut and by "the end of 1976 there was hardly a Muslim left" there.<sup>788</sup> By contrast, Christians continued to live in the western sectors, notably in Ras Beirut, where they were "left more or less in peace" from 1977 to 1982.<sup>789</sup>

In the wake of the Israeli invasion of 1982 and the installment of the Multinational Forces (MNF) to oversee the evacuation of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) from Beirut, the Lebanese Civil War entered a new phase. On May 17<sup>th</sup>, 1983 the Christian Phalange dominated government signed a peace accord with Israel. In September, Israeli forces withdrew from West Beirut and the Shuf region

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<sup>786</sup> Salibi talk, Deceber 2010.

<sup>787</sup> Haugbolle, *War and Memory*, 168.

<sup>788</sup> Hanf, 345-7.

<sup>789</sup> Ibid. Moreover, during the war, Beirut's population numbers stagnated on account of lower birth rates and emigration abroad (more than half a million). Beirut's population in 1975 was 2,325,000 and in 1988, 2,337,000. Salma Hussein, "Le redistribution des communautés chi'ite et Sunnite dans le Grand-Beyrouth (1975-1988)," in *Beyrouth: Regards Croisés*, ed. Michael Davie (Tours, France: URBAMA, Urbanisation du Monde Arabe, Universite de Tours, 1997) 211.

leaving their Christian Phalange allies, and their military wing the Lebanese Forces (LF), without protection. Almost immediately in the “War of the Mountain,” the Druze Progressive Socialist Party (PSP) militia avenged the LF for the atrocities committed on Druze villages.<sup>790</sup> Lebanese president Amin Jumayil, also head of the Phalange militia, attempting “to prevent the link-up of PSP militiamen in the Mountain with their Amal counterparts in West Beirut’s southern suburbs,” sent the army into West Beirut.<sup>791</sup> The result was a massive battle in February 1984 in West Beirut between government forces and the opposition, Amal and the PSP, that saw the army split with its Shi’ite soldiers joining the opposition. Though Ras Beirut had suffered under the Israeli siege of West Beirut in the summer of 1982, this battle of February 6, 1984 was most deafeningly played out in its bombardment by long-range artillery guns from the Lebanese Army in the East, backed by the “biggest naval fire force in the world,” the U.S. aircraft carrier, the *New Jersey*, that bombarded the Mountain.<sup>792</sup> Ras Beirut saw street-to-street fighting on a scale not experienced previously and on that day “some 6,000 homes were either partially or fully destroyed” in Ras Beirut.<sup>793</sup> In the aftermath, civilians left Ras Beirut in a huge exodus, among them 50,000 Christians.<sup>794</sup> By 1987, no more than 50,000

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<sup>790</sup> Trabulsi, *A History*, 230. President Jumayil renounced the peace accord with Israel in March 1984.

<sup>791</sup> Ibid, 231.

<sup>792</sup> Ibid.

<sup>793</sup> Maha Yahya, “Reconstituting Space: The Aberration of the Urban in Beirut,” in *Recovering Beirut*, eds. Khalaf and Khoury, 161.

<sup>794</sup> Hanf, 346.

Christians remained in West Beirut, “a third of what they had been ten years earlier.”<sup>795</sup> About 100,000 Muslims also left the western sectors of Beirut in 1984.<sup>796</sup>

A new transient population of Shi’ites refugees found refuge in Ras Beirut in the wake of the 1984 battles. Since 1967, subsequent waves of Shi’ite migrations from southern Lebanon fleeing Israeli incursions made their way to the southern suburbs of Beirut. As the Lebanese Army pounded the southern outskirts of the city, the Shi’ite population resettled in the more secure Ras Beirut areas of Manara (lighthouse) and Hamra. This new Shiite influx “created a kind of proletarianization of some of the richer areas of Beirut.”<sup>797</sup> Once Amal defeated the Army a proportion Shiites returned to their homes in the southern parts of the city. However, many remained in West Beirut, including Ras Beirut, after 1984. One Ras Beirut noted that, “I never met a Shiite until I was fifteen years old; they came over to sell small things, eggs, chicken, from the south. They were never part of the Ras Beirut community.”<sup>798</sup>

With the destruction of central Beirut at beginning of the war, Hamra of Ras Beirut took on a renewed, albeit altered, commercial centrality during the war. A project spearheaded by the AUB Department of Architecture in 1988 addressed the question as to whether “Hamra [can] be considered as the new downtown of West Beirut following the paralysis of the central business district.”<sup>799</sup> The study explained how the war

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<sup>795</sup> Picard, 148.

<sup>796</sup> Hanf, 346.

<sup>797</sup> Husseini, 215-216.

<sup>798</sup> Khawli interview.

<sup>799</sup> Robert Saliba and Yaser Abun Nasr, “Development of the Informal Sector during the Lebanese War; A Survey of Hamra Street Vendors,” in *Beyrouth: Regards Croisés*, ed. Michael

transformed Hamra from a glitzy up-scale retail district into an informal, sometimes illegal, black market. It identified four main reasons to understand this change: the “forced migration [of Shi’ites] from the South,” “the decentralization of small businesses from downtown,” “a decrease in employment opportunities in the formal sector,” and the “absence of governmental controls.”<sup>800</sup> To a certain extent, the ancient suqs of the city center became a mass of mobile shops in the shape of informal street vendors using carts, building entrances, and the trunks of their cars to sell their wares. But for the most part, Hamra was regarded as a shell of its former self and a daily reminder of the impact of the war on everyday life. As a result of this transformation, the Shi’ites faced much resentment from the pre-war population of Ras Beirut largely because of their association with this down market change, their perceived radicalization, and their poverty.

Not surprisingly, the Anglo-American community of Ras Beirut scattered during the war. From 1982 on, however, the few who did remain became targets of Shi’ite radicals whose goal was to purge west Beirut of Christians, mostly Lebanese, but remaining Americans as well.<sup>801</sup> A couple of weeks after the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in June 1982, acting AUB president David S. Dodge, son of Bayard Dodge and Mary Bliss, born and raised in Ras Beirut, and representing the fourth generation of its Anglo-American community, was kidnapped on campus. Dodge was the “first target of the new Hizballah’s anti-American campaign,” and was held for one year to the day.<sup>802</sup> Six

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Davie (Tours, France: URBAMA, Urbanisation du Monde Arabe, Universite de Tours, 1997), 179.

<sup>800</sup> Ibid, 203.

<sup>801</sup> Hanf, 345.

months after Dodge's release, Malcolm Kerr, AUB president, was shot and killed on January 18, 1984 as he left his office in College Hall. Kerr, also born in Ras Beirut, was the son of Anglo-American missionary educators, Elsa and Stanley Kerr, who worked in Turkey as relief workers to Armenian refugees after the First World War. They came to work in academia at AUB in 1925, and lived on the top floor of Mansur Jurdak's building, where they raised their four children until the outbreak of war in 1975.<sup>803</sup> Both Dodge and Kerr were products of the Anglo-American community representing generational ties across place and time. On November 8, 1991, a year after the end of the war, a car bomb felled College Hall, the ultimate symbol of the college on a hill and the Anglo-American community, not to mention one of Ras Beirut's oldest buildings. Though not comparable in scale to the tens of thousands of lives lost, its felling symbolized in material terms one of Ras Beirut's greatest tragedies. It was, however, restorable. It reopened in 1999, and its exterior was almost an exact replica of the original.<sup>804</sup> To many of its inhabitants, however, Ras Beirut would and could never be the same especially in the postwar era.

### **The Lebanese Civil War and Exceptionalism**

The question of whether the missionaries found Ras Beirut a place already exceptional or if they made it so needs to be expanded to consider the impact of the

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<sup>802</sup> Susan Kerr Van de Ven, *One Family's Response to Terrorism; A Daughter's Memoir* (Syracuse University Press, 2008), 81.

<sup>803</sup> Stanley Kerr wrote his own memoir of the Armenian Massacres and his work with the American Near East Relief from 1919-1922 entitled *The Lions of Marash* (Albany: State University of New York, 1973).

<sup>804</sup> May Farah, "Back to the New College Hall," *Saudi Aramco World* (September-October 1999): 30-33.



Lebanese Civil War. Indeed, the underlying imperative that consistently asserted itself in the oral interviews conducted for this dissertation was the impact of the War on local claims to Ras Beirut's exceptionalism. Even though narrators frequently brought up the College-Ras Beirut polemic, the question of the War lurked not far underneath the surface. As much as I tried to avoid talking about the War, it became increasingly clear that whether or not I wanted to discuss the War did not matter. This only became clear to me after several months of interviewing, rough transcriptions, and re-reading Ras Beirut memoirs.

Ras Beirut's narrators' constant return to the War in their stories signals the deeper meanings Portelli suggests lay underneath the facts. While Ras Beirut's narrators used the War to showcase the endurance of Ras Beirut's interconfessional kinship, many also declared that the War destroyed Ras Beirut as an idealized protected place not so much physically but metaphysically. The several kidnappings and assassination of members of Ras Beirut's Anglo-American community, though few compared to the still-unaccounted for thousands of Lebanese, wrecked the notion of Ras Beirut as a safe haven. Since the First World War members of the Anglo-American community boasted of it as a refuge as locals did until the early 1980s. Indeed, to most Ras Beirutis both the act of taking western hostages and the way the western media portrayed Beirut were the greatest injuries to Ras Beirut's cosmopolitan pride. Horrified at the brutality of these kidnappings, Ras Beirutis were shocked that their self-conceived identification with tolerance, education, secularism, and professionalism was indiscriminately placed in the same camp as religious fundamentalism by the western media. They felt betrayed by the governments of the people they welcomed over the past century and a half and by the

ideologies they identified with.<sup>805</sup> To a certain extent, all that Ras Beirut symbolized was dismissed as meaningless by the western world. This perhaps presented the greatest crisis of confidence for the prewar generation who, for the most part, embraced Anglo-American ideals of democracy and freedom. Many lost their bearings and felt the War made them dispensable and irrelevant. To some, Ras Beirut's exceptionalism was the cause of its own destruction.

Mounir Shama'a, for example, attributes Ras Beirut's destruction directly to its exceptionalism. He contends that Ras Beirut was the victim of the larger struggle in the Arab World between repression and tolerance, and that as repression took the upper hand, the freedom, democracy, and tolerance that Ras Beirut stood for was purposefully and brutally destroyed.<sup>806</sup> Shama'a's interpretation of the War and Ras Beirut's place outside of the War resonates with the popularization of the title of Ghassan Tueni history of the war, *Une guerre pour les autres*, or *A War for the Others*, published in 1985.<sup>807</sup> Even though Tueni wrote in the preface of the 2004 edition of his book that he never intended to absolve Lebanese complicity in the War, his title became the all-too convenient catch phrase for many who attribute the cause and the perpetuation of the War to external factors, regional and international, rather than internal ones concerning the vast socio-economic disparities and critically flawed political structure that characterized and still characterize the Lebanese system. In this sense, how Ras Beirutis remember the golden age of prewar Ras Beirut is also a rejection of any Lebanese responsibility for the War,

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<sup>805</sup> See Makdisi's *Faith Misplaced* for an historical overview of this sense of betrayal.

<sup>806</sup> Shama'a, (rough translation), 114.

<sup>807</sup> Ghassan Tueni, *Une guerre pour les autres*, (Paris: Fayard, 1985, 2004).

suggesting that Ras Beirut's harmonious past was not as glorious as it is remembered.<sup>808</sup>

This denial, however, resonates with the need to project Ras Beirut's exceptionalism, and as Halbwachs reminds us, says more about the present than it does about the past.

### **Postwar Ras Beirut**

Despite the 1984 battle and the felling of College Hall in 1991, Ras Beirut suffered little physical damage compared to other parts of Beirut. Indeed, many Ras Beirutis do not consider that the War destroyed Ras Beirut as much as the postwar period. Of the community layers that make up Ras Beirut's past little remains. The most notable absence immediately after the War was Ras Beirut's Anglo-American community. Certainly this was the result of the regional insecurity above all. But part of the reason was the separate lives lived by the Anglo-American community and the lack of close ties forged between them and the local community. Remembering her life growing up in Ras Beirut in the 1920s, Laurens Seelye's daughter Mary-Averett noted is that "there wasn't any kind of pulse or rhythm that brought us into the orbit of the Lebanese as kids [...] our childhood friends were school friends who were all in the American school and who were being prepared for American colleges."<sup>809</sup> Fadlo Khawli, son of Bulus Khawli, who grew up in the 1940s and 1950s, echoes this sentiment saying, "We didn't meet many Americans. There were no American families (among us) – they sent their children to special schools and then to the U.S. I never met any young Americans – never played with them – they went to a different school. But the older Americans who came first

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<sup>808</sup> Michael Young, "Ghassan Tueni takes our reinvented past," *The Daily Star*, June 14, 2012.

<sup>809</sup> Mary-Averett Seelye, "Ras Beirut, ninety years ago...", *Libanais Sans Frontieres* (posted March 30, 2009), [www.lebanesewithoutfrontiers.org](http://www.lebanesewithoutfrontiers.org).

spoke Arabic but later not.”<sup>810</sup> Though they have not returned in any significant number, Peter Dorman, born in Ras Beirut, graduate of Amherst College, and great-great grandson of Daniel Bliss, was inaugurated as AUB’s fifteenth president in 2008.

As Salibi’s students found through their graduate seminar, many of the Protestants of Ras Beirut left during the War. There are no more Jurdaks or their offspring and only a few members of the Khawli and Makdisi families still reside in Ras Beirut. And as Michel Bekhazi noted, the war split Orthodox Christian families apart as they resettled in other parts of Beirut. Among the Sunni Muslims, some of the older members of the families remain, but many of their children and grandchildren can no longer afford to live in Ras Beirut. Indeed the astronomical prices of Ras Beirut real estate in the postwar era prohibit descendants of Ras Beirut’s longest-standing communities from raising their families there.

The investment in luxury apartments in Ras Beirut is not solely a post-war phenomenon; since the 1950s and 1960s oil-rich Arabs from the Gulf and wealthy Arabs fleeing neighboring socialist revolutions invested their capital in real estate especially in the high-end high-rise apartment buildings coming up along the sea front in Ras Beirut.<sup>811</sup> What is new in the postwar era is the scale of the building: “Ras Beirut is experiencing a new kind of war that is transforming its streets and its buildings.”<sup>812</sup> In this transformation, part globalization, part gentrification, Ras Beirut is losing its character and to a certain extent any claim to its exceptionalism. In place of Fayssal’s Restaurant,

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<sup>810</sup> Khawli interview.

<sup>811</sup> Ruppert, 55.

<sup>812</sup> Cynthia Myntti, “AUB and Ras Beirut in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Nostalgia, Gentrification and other Problems,” Paper presented at *AUB – A Century and a Half*, May 13-15, 2013.

closed during the 1980s, on Bliss Street is McDonalds. The building where the Ras Beirut Bookstore used to be, also on Bliss Street, was torn down in 2008 and replaced with a super luxury building surrounded by a gated garden. One observer noted that in Ras Beirut, “buildings now replace books” (Figure 58; Figure 59).<sup>813</sup>

As Cynthia Myntti, director of AUB’s Neighborhood Initiative, presciently noted, “AUB has inadvertently given private developers the gift of unimpeded views to the Mediterranean and over the rare greenery of the campus, and with these views, the opportunity to sell fabulous multi-million dollar dwellings to a global elite.”<sup>814</sup> In a dramatic about-face, the city now dominates and overshadows the College (Figure 60) Ras Beirut buildings now dwarf the College buildings and as they look down on the campus they create a concrete wall around the College of an entirely different intention from the original walls. Perhaps ironically the city took over the view and the College’s domination of it. This shift gives a new twist to Mitchell’s sight-site dialectic where the site now commands sight.

### **Concluding Remarks**

The question of whether the missionaries found Ras Beirut already exceptional or made it so is not as important as how the convergence of narratives of its exceptionalism come from opposite temporalities and geographies. Through the conceptual frame of landscape and the lens of memory multiple views and multiple voices of Ras Beirut’s past are seen, heard, lived, imagined, and dreamed (Figure 61).

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<sup>813</sup> Rana Hayek, “Once Upon a Time...The Ras Beirut Bookstore,” *Al-Akhbar*, November 2007.

<sup>814</sup> Myntti, 3-4.

The prolific writer Amin Maalouf, who lived in Ras Beirut up until the age of fifteen, frames Ras Beirut's exceptionalism in comparison to the largely Christian neighborhood of the National Museum where his family moved in 1962. He notes that,

compared to other parts of the city, Ras Beirut was the promise of a true dynamic integration combining respect for differences and openness to modernity. The neighborhood of the Museum took refuge behind a façade of neutrality, a sterile anonymity, [that] could never produce any collective project, or be a model against confined community enclaves.<sup>815</sup>

Even today, Maalouf argues, Ras Beirut still has that cosmopolitan character colored by local culture that creates its particular diversity and mixity (*mixité metissée*). Maalouf contends that Ras Beirut was distinct from other parts of Beirut because its constitution since the nineteenth century resulted from a gradual accumulation of peoples from every corner of the region in addition to more sudden waves of refugees.<sup>816</sup> From mountain or interior, the Maghreb, Palestine, or the United States, Ras Beirut's mix gave it its exceptional diversity.<sup>817</sup>

Assertions of exceptionalism cannot escape the question of essentialist elitism and the extent to which Ras Beiruti's lamenting of a bygone era can be boiled down to a yearning for an age of unbridled consumption. Certainly, many of Ras Beirut's narratives of exceptionalism emphasize the glamour that identifies Beirut as the café-culture "Paris

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<sup>815</sup> Amin Maalouf, "'Les figures de l'absence,' Entretien avec Amin Maalouf," in *Beyrouth: La Brûlure des rêves*, edited by Jade Tabet (Paris: Edition Autrement, 2001) (16-25), 21-2. Original in French: "*Par rapport aux autres quartiers de la ville, Ras-Beyrouth représentait la promesse d'une véritable dynamique d'intégration associant respect des différences et ouverture à la modernité. Le quartier du Musée, lui, se retranchait derrière une neutralité de façade, un anonymat stérile qui n'a jamais pu produire le moindre projet collectif, ni constituer un contre-modèle à l'enfermement des enclaves communautaires*" (my translation).

<sup>816</sup> Maalouf, 19.

<sup>817</sup> Haugbolle, 166-167.

of the Middle East” or the exotic “Switzerland of the Orient.” Are Ras Beirutis “grieving cosmopolitanism” in an exclusivist and superficial association with living an American way of life?<sup>818</sup> Or are they grieving a different kind of cosmopolitanism? Urbanist Richard Sennett views diversity at the heart of the cosmopolitanism that characterized the late nineteenth century.<sup>819</sup> Then cosmopolitanism invoked a mix of peoples unlike each other who shared the same urban space and “was a fundamental quality of living in a city, and liberating at that.”<sup>820</sup> The cosmopolitanism of the late twentieth century, however, evokes a different world. The late twentieth-century cosmopolitanism is one associated with a sterilized globalization. In this cosmopolitanism, differences are made uniform and place is almost irrelevant and therefore can never be exceptional. Arguably, this is the grief Ras Beirutis harbor in their increasing sense of displacement. They did not change, but place did. Their grief for the prewar past affords them to escape from the postwar present that not only renders them insignificant to the multi-million-dollar luxury flats around them but that also permits them to disdain the now settled Shi’ite populations and the fresh wave of Syrian refugees flooding the streets of Ras Beirut. Through telling stories of Ras Beirut’s exceptionalism, Ras Beirutis resist change and the “acceleration of history.”<sup>821</sup>

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<sup>818</sup> Will Hanley, “Grieving Cosmopolitanism in Middle East Studies,” *History Compass* 6/5 (2008): 1346-1367.

<sup>819</sup> Richard Sennett, “Cosmopolitanism and the Social Experience of Cities, in *Conceiving Cosmopolitanism: Theory, Context and Practice*, Steven Vertovec and Robin Cohen, eds. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 42-47.

<sup>820</sup> Myntti, 3.

<sup>821</sup> Nora, 7.

As Ras Beirutis insist on Ras Beirut's exceptionalism they resist moving beyond the past. In other words, their particular insistence-resistance is a "projection of nostalgia [...] that charges itself with the preservation of what would otherwise be lost both mentally and materially."<sup>822</sup> Svetlana Boym defines two kinds of nostalgia: restorative, which concerns the resurrection of the past in monuments, traditions, and symbols distinct from a reflective nostalgia, which mourns an intangible past forever gone.<sup>823</sup> While reflective nostalgia does not hope to revive the past, its embodiment in the voices and the memories of its tellers gives them relevance to the present. In that sense, the past and the present coexist. In their conjuring of a lost past, Ras Beirut's narratives, "whether oral or written, personal or collective," give meaning to ordinary lives.<sup>824</sup> They offer a sense of certainty in times of uncertainty and "fear of what will become of Ras Beirut, and how the architectural and social fabrics being destroyed through the process of gentrification."<sup>825</sup> The "double temporality" of the historical time of the teller's life course and the actual time of the telling is integral to the construction of memory based on individual narratives.<sup>826</sup> Most importantly, the telling of stories "preserves the teller from oblivion; the story builds the identity of the teller and the legacy which she or he leaves for the future."<sup>827</sup> Even though, as oral historian Ronald Grele points out, the story told in an oral history interview is most often one told many times before, the story

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<sup>822</sup> Susan Crane, "Writing the Individual," 1373-1385, 1372.

<sup>823</sup> Boym, *Nostalgia*, 41.

<sup>824</sup> Antoinette Errante, "Oral Histories and ways of Remembering," 2000.

<sup>825</sup> Myntti, 1.

<sup>826</sup> Mitchell, *Holy Landscapes* 213. Maynes, Pierce, Laslett, *Telling Stories*, 3.

<sup>827</sup> Portelli, 59.



telling is never completely the same; “each time it was told within the linguistic, logical, and factual limits of the time of the telling as well as the limits of public and private memory, and the each time it was told it changed.”<sup>828</sup> In large part, this affords a place to individual agency in the unheard personal narratives while it draws an integrated history and prosopography of place. In the process of giving and making place, it underlines the integrity of the “shared authority,” the “mutual sighting,” and the dialogue so central to oral history and its deep connection to the making of place.<sup>829</sup> As De Certeau’s asserts, “stories diversify, [while] rumors totalize.”<sup>830</sup> The collection of oral histories builds a multivocal and multivariied legacy of Ras Beirut’s storied past that gives meaning and relevance to the present.

Through remembered landscapes, architecture, letters, memoirs, and oral history, narratives are the conduit of exceptionalisms that give texture and meaning to Ras Beirut’s history. How can one otherwise contextualize the story of Ras Beirut’s California Flowers shop on Jeanne D’Arc Street founded by Ibrahim Takkoush, son and grandson of Sunni Muslim Takkoush family of Ras Beirut? He travelled to Egypt in the 1950s as an aspiring young movie actor with grand plans and promises of going to Hollywood. When he returned to Ras Beirut he came across the opportunity to be the sole importer of flowers from Bulgaria, which made him the main flower distributor of Ras Beirut. He could not refuse this opportunity and at the same time he finally

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<sup>828</sup> Ronald Grele, *Envelopes of Sound*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., 261-68 and quoted in “Oral History as Evidence,” *Handbook of Oral History*, 71.

<sup>829</sup> Michael Frisch, *A Shared Authority: Essays on the Craft and Meaning of Oral and Public History* (Albany: State University of New York, 1990). Portelli, 31

<sup>830</sup> Certeau, 107.

succumbed to parental pressure to stay close to home and marry a local girl. But he named his shop California Flowers to represent the films he never produced and the movie star dreams he never realized (Figure 62).<sup>831</sup> It is these kinds of memories that tie people to place, perhaps “not interesting to anyone else, but after all that’s what gives a neighborhood its character.”<sup>832</sup> Perhaps it is true, as some claim that, “without AUB [Ras Beirut] was nothing;” or as others claim, without Ras Beirut AUB would be nothing.<sup>833</sup> In the end, what is more interesting is how these divergent claims converged into narratives of exceptionalism and crossed cultures, temporalities, and geographies while engendering a distinct sense of place that resulted in the making of Ras Beirut. Ras Beirut’s landscape of memory materialized out of push of providence that inspired Anglo-American missionaries in 1870 and the pull of recollection that still invokes the memories and dreams of its prewar communities.

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<sup>831</sup> Ibrahim Takkoush interview. He starred and directed in two short movies when he returned to Beirut, but had a falling out with the producers so gave up the whole endeavor.

<sup>832</sup> Certeau, 108.

<sup>833</sup> Khawli interview.

## **APPENDIX**

### **MAPS AND ILLUSTRATIONS REFERRED TO IN TEXT**

Figure 1 Map of Ras Beirut with *manatiq* (quarters) and electoral *mahallat* (districts).

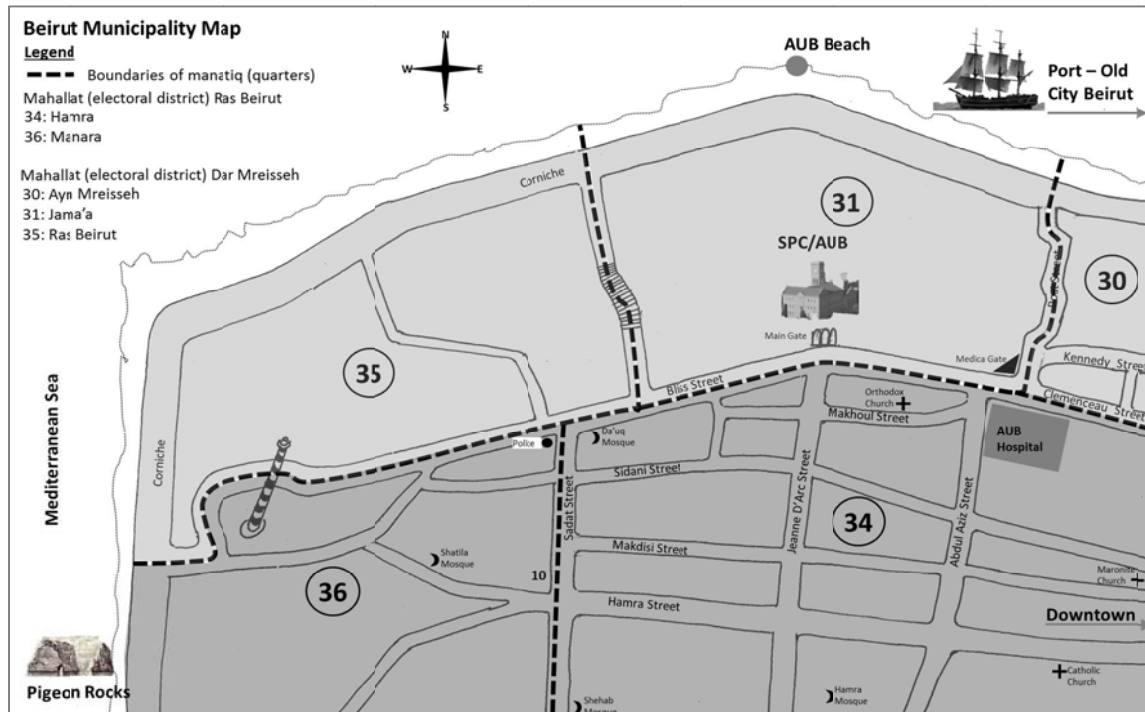


Figure 2 View of Ras Beirut in late nineteenth century from northeast, SPC buildings uppermost area.



Figure 3 Beirut peninsula with Ras Beirut at tip

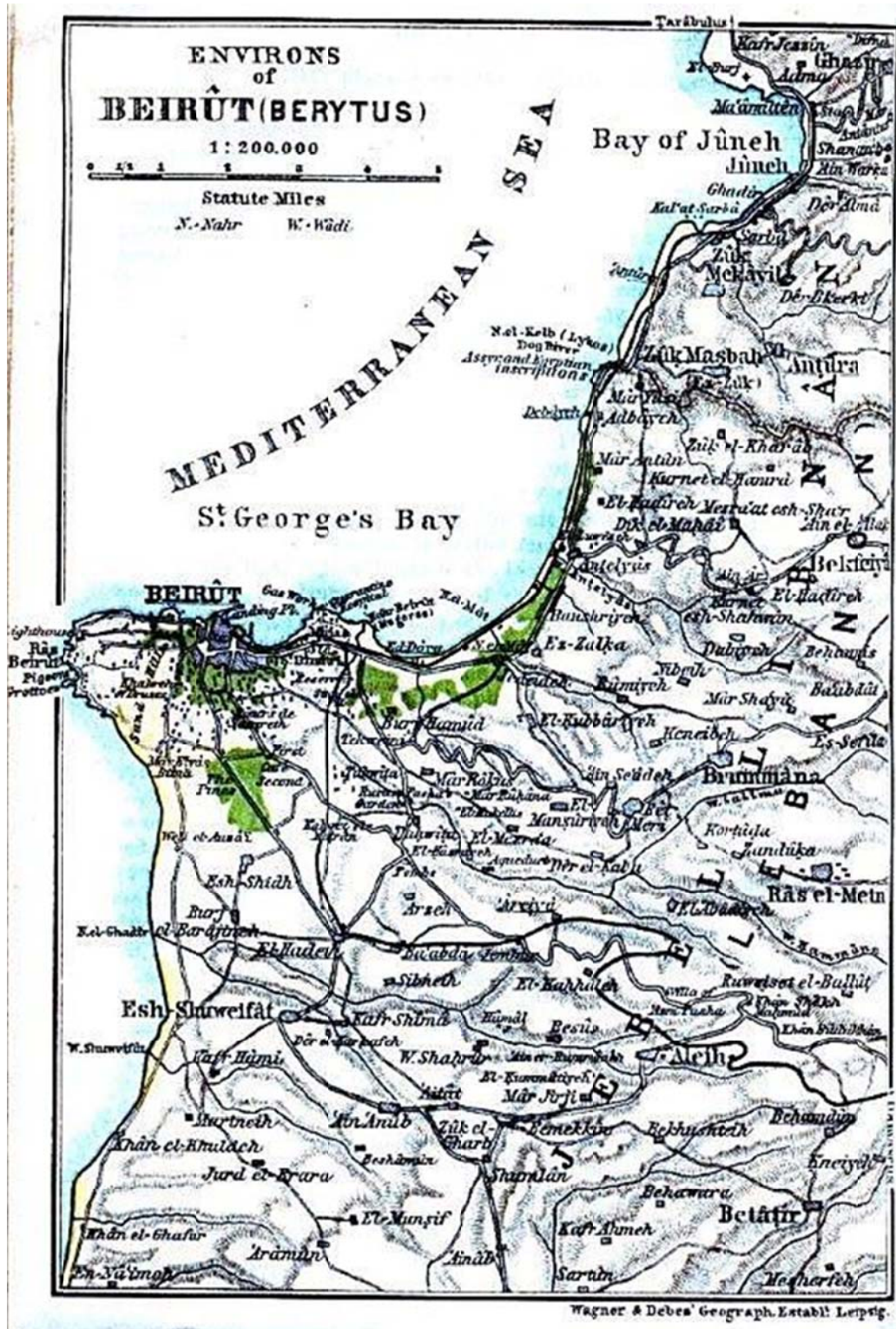




Figure 4 SPC's College Hall



Figure 5 Princeton's Nassau Hall



Figure 6 College Hall with green in front (Moore Photo)



Figure 7 Amherst College row with Johnson tower at center

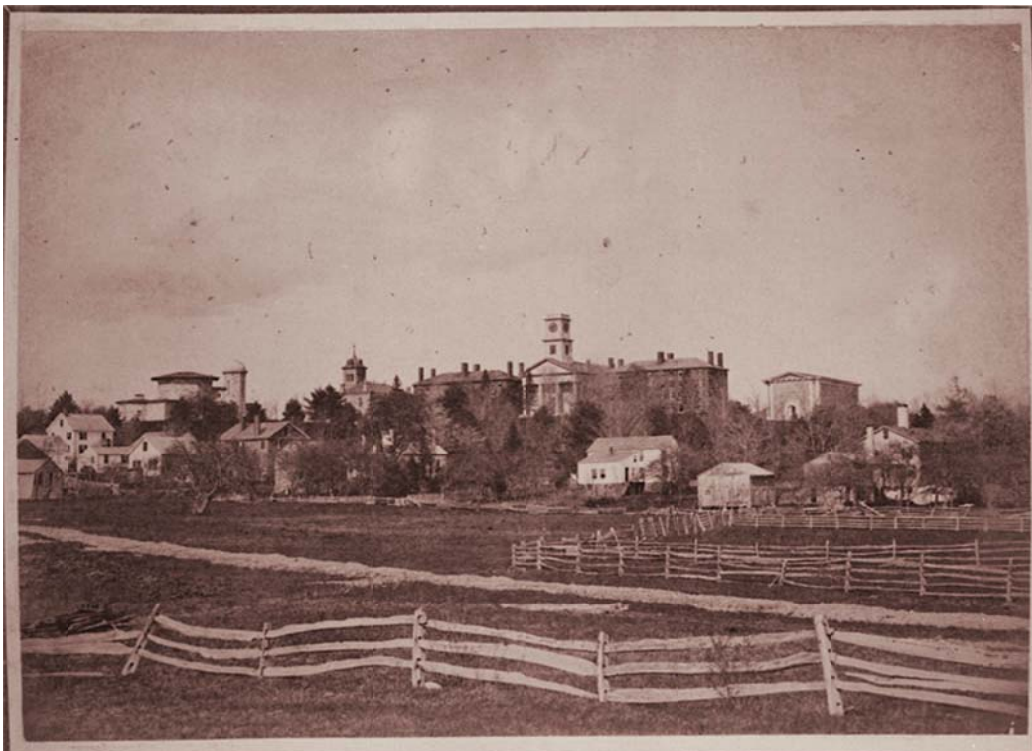




Figure 8 SPC college row



Figure 9 Ada Dodge Hall on Bliss Street (Moore Photo)



Figure10 Amherst College Morgan Hall

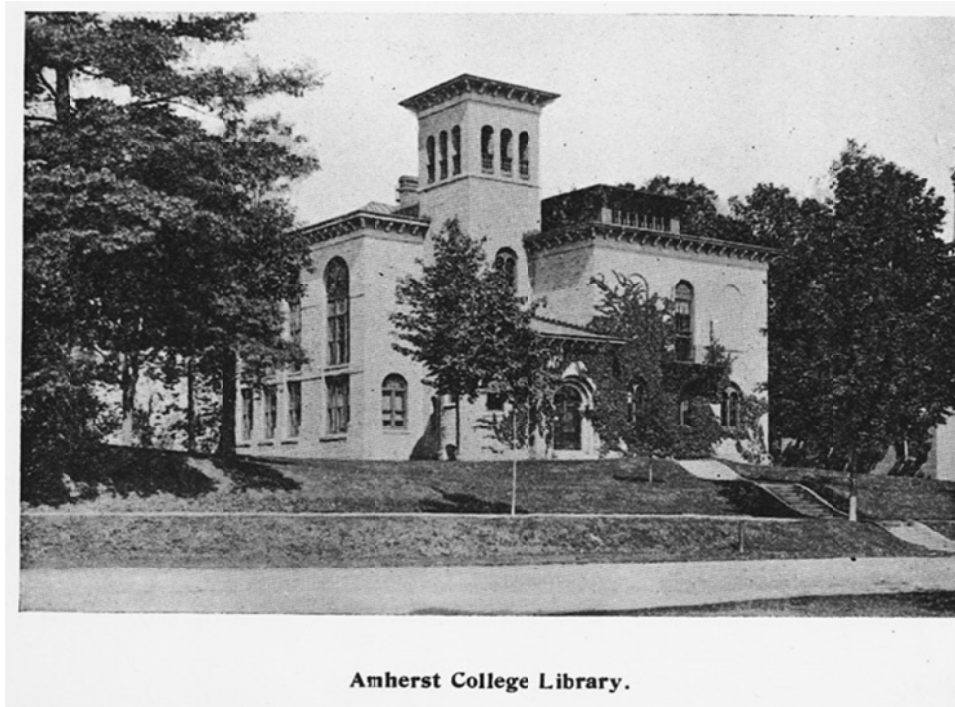


Figure 11 Dodge and College Hall towers (Moore Photo)



Figure 12 Amherst College Stearns Church exterior

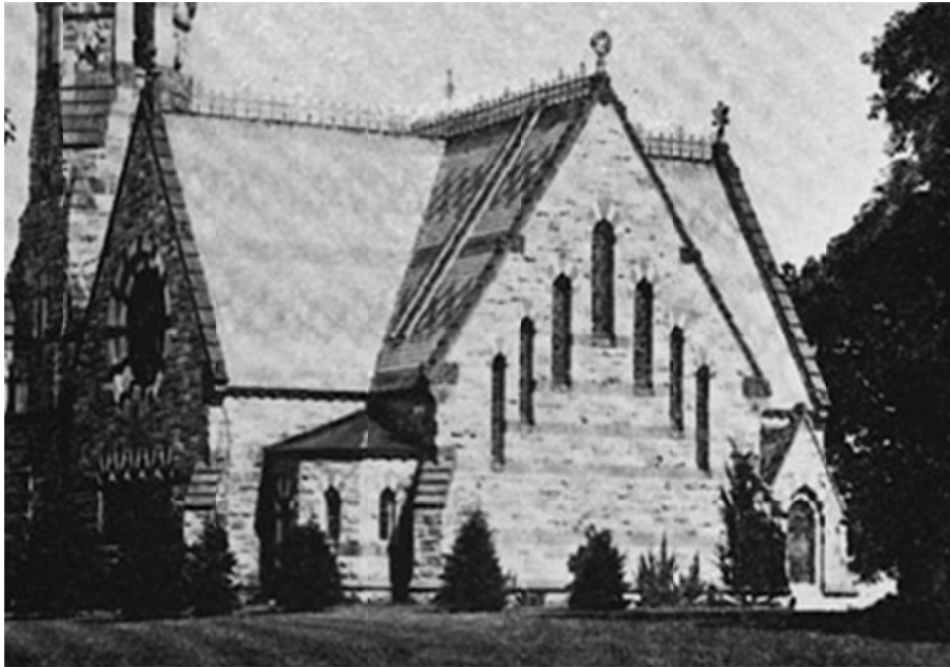


Figure 13 SPC Assembly Hall exterior



Figure 14 Amherst College Stearns Church interior





Figure 15 SPC Assembly Hall interior



Figure 16 Post Hall

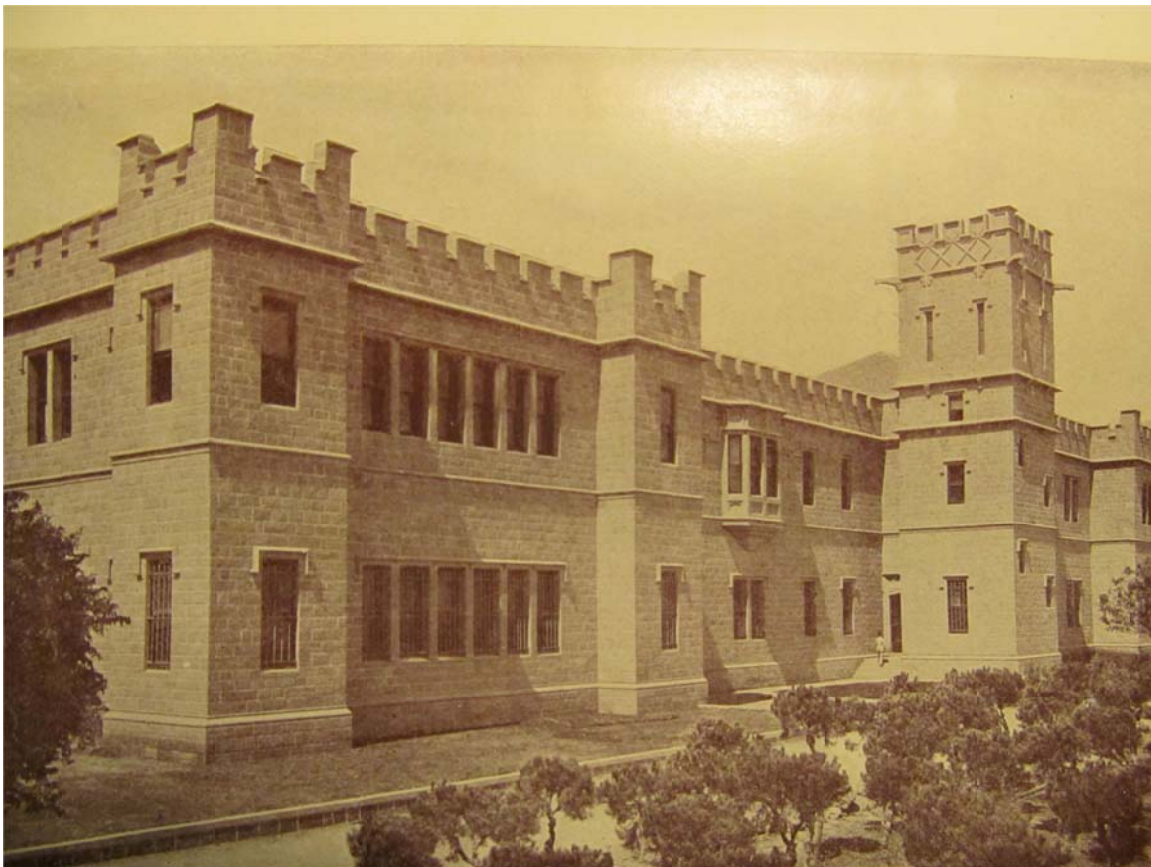


Figure 17 Main Gate (1998)



oto: Børre Ludvigsen, © AUB, 1998

Figure 18 SPC model with Jessup (Moore photo)

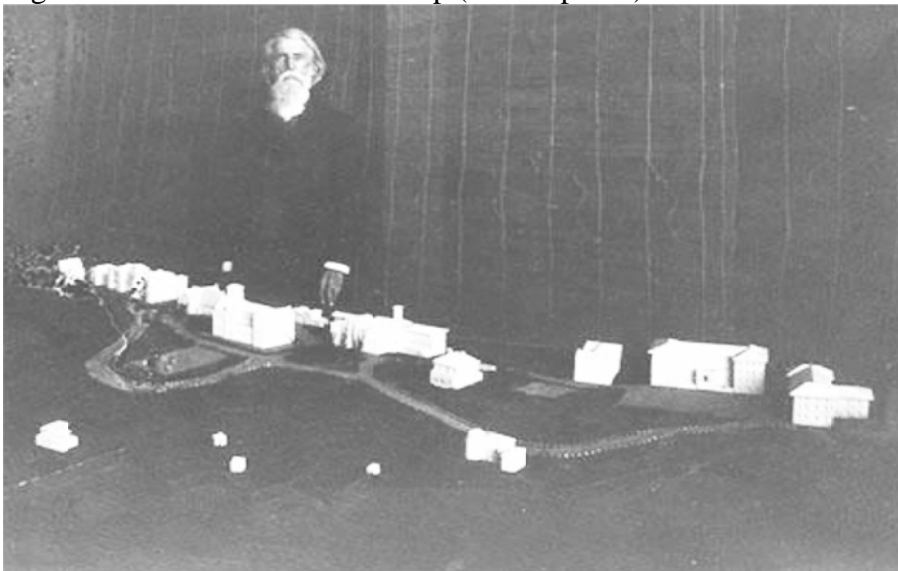




Figure 19 SPC model at St. Louis Fair. On permanent exhibition at the Museum of Natural History, New York.

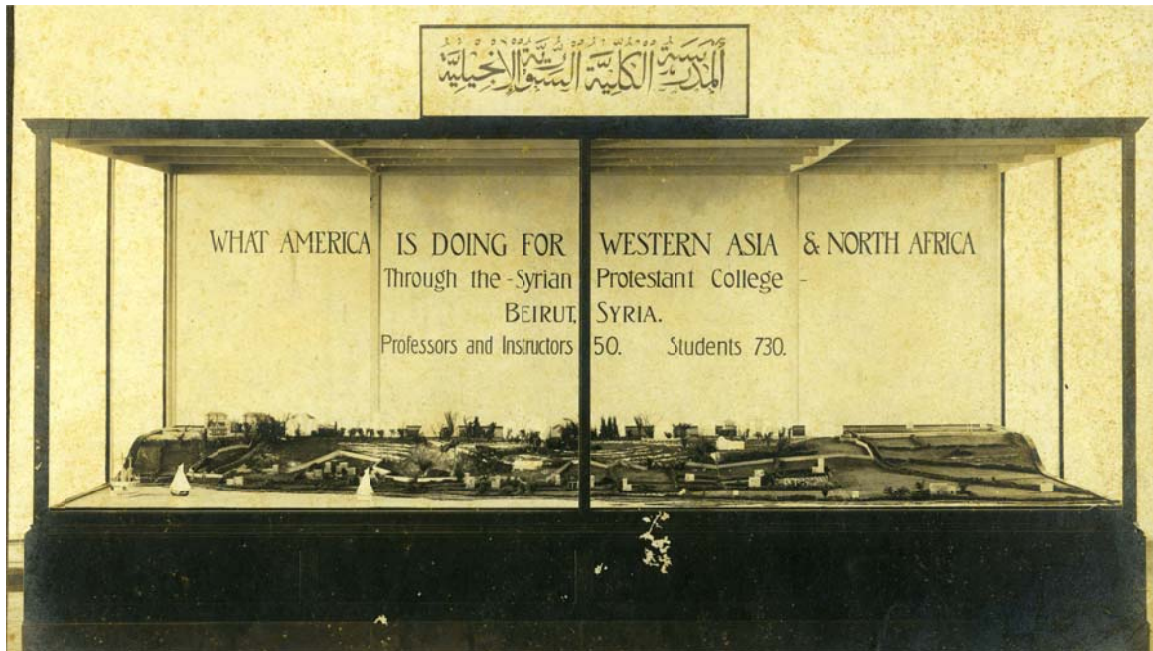


Figure 20 View of SPC from the sea

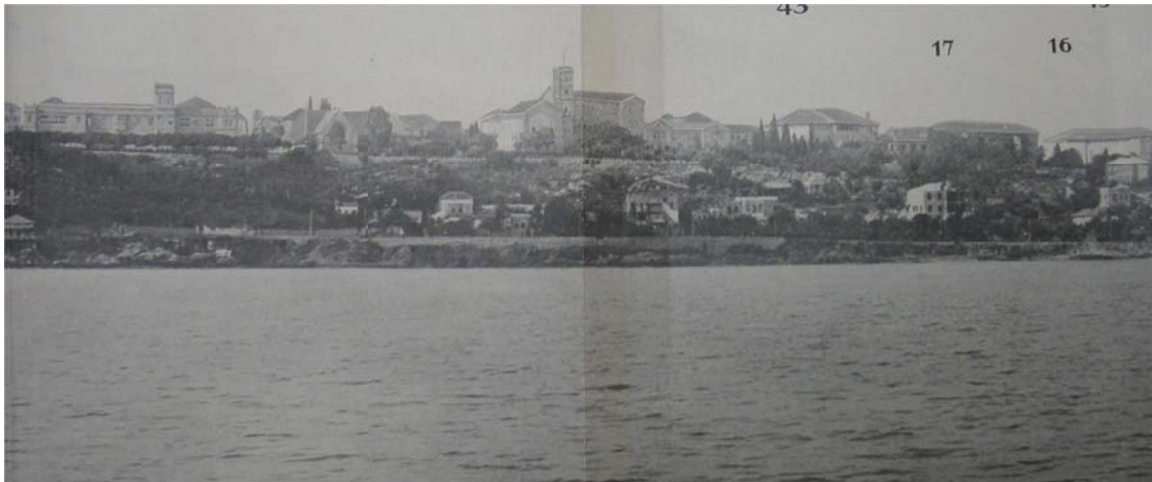


Figure 21 West Hall exterior



Figure 22 West Hall plan

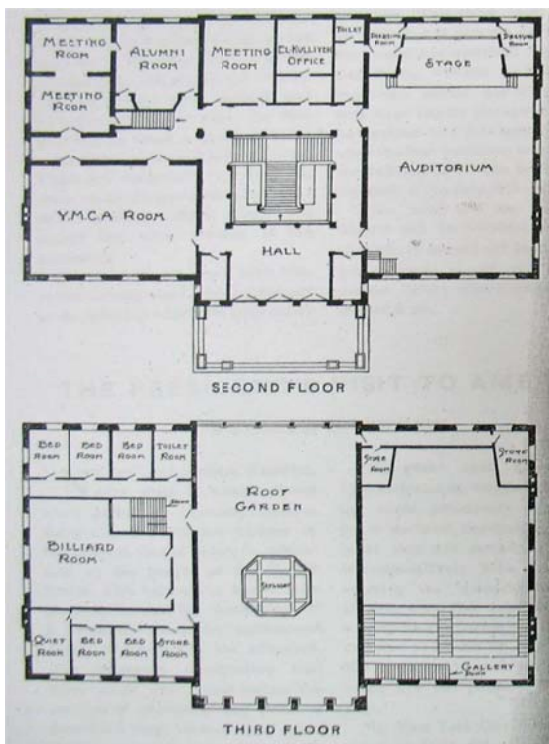




Figure 23 Dodge tower with tramway on Bliss Street.



Figure 24 College Hall with clock above bell



Figure 25 Aerial view of College and Bliss Street

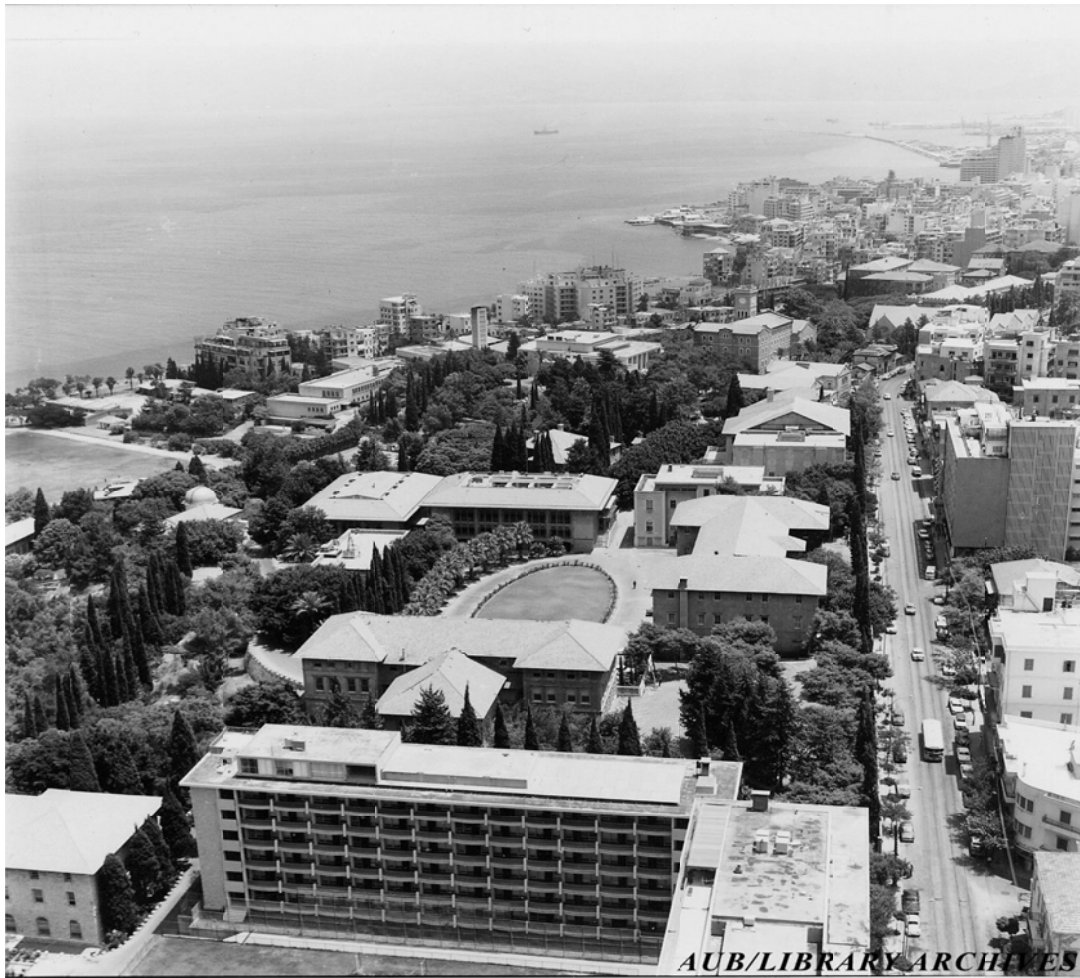


Figure 26 Pigeon Rocks

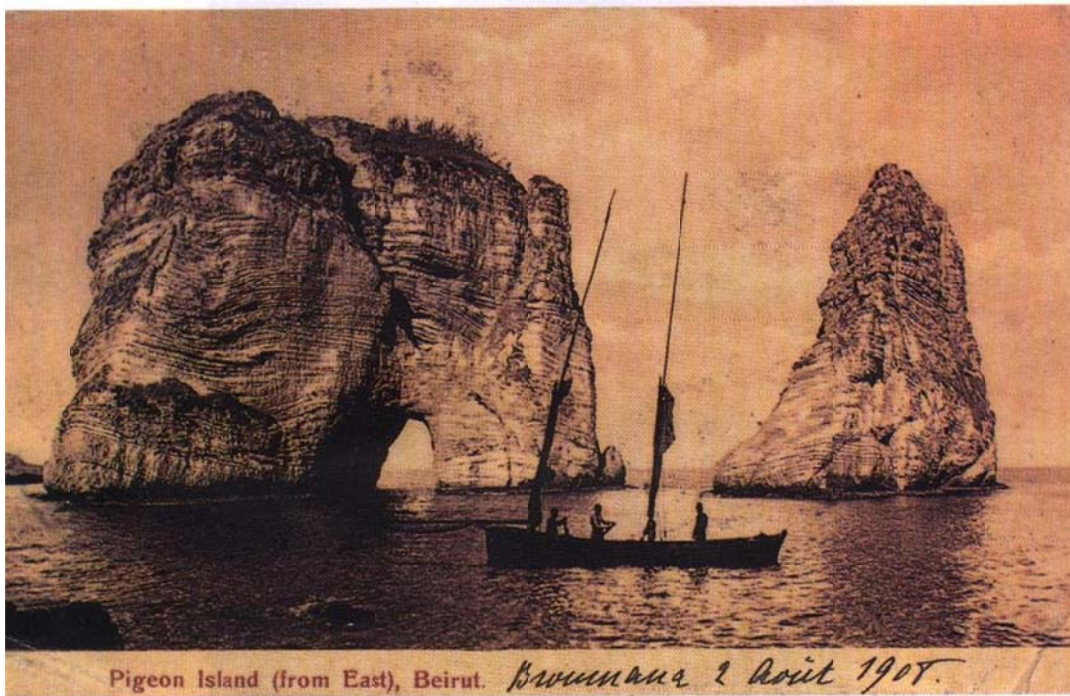


Figure 27 Charlotte's map of Anglo-American houses

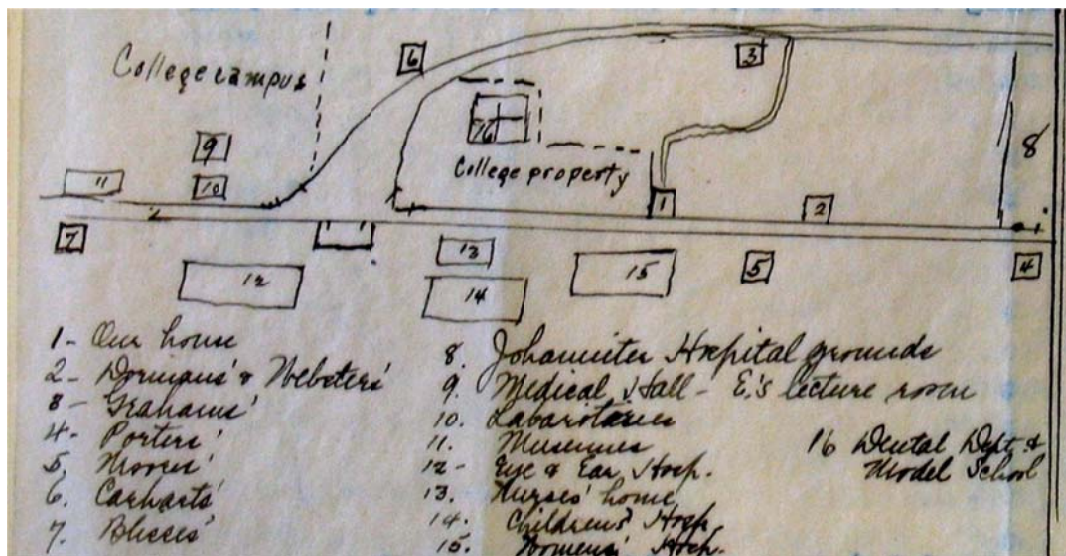




Figure 28 Charlotte's album: her house and Bliss Street looking west



Figure 29 Charlotte's album: from sea up to Ras Beirut



Figure 30 Photo of old brick lighthouse painted black and white



Figure 31 Arthur R. Dray



Figure 32 Ardati house



Figure 33 Post House/School of Dentistry



Figure 34 *Al-Ahrar* Newspaper – “Aram” Aginian





Figure 35 Anglo-American houses of Ras Beirut

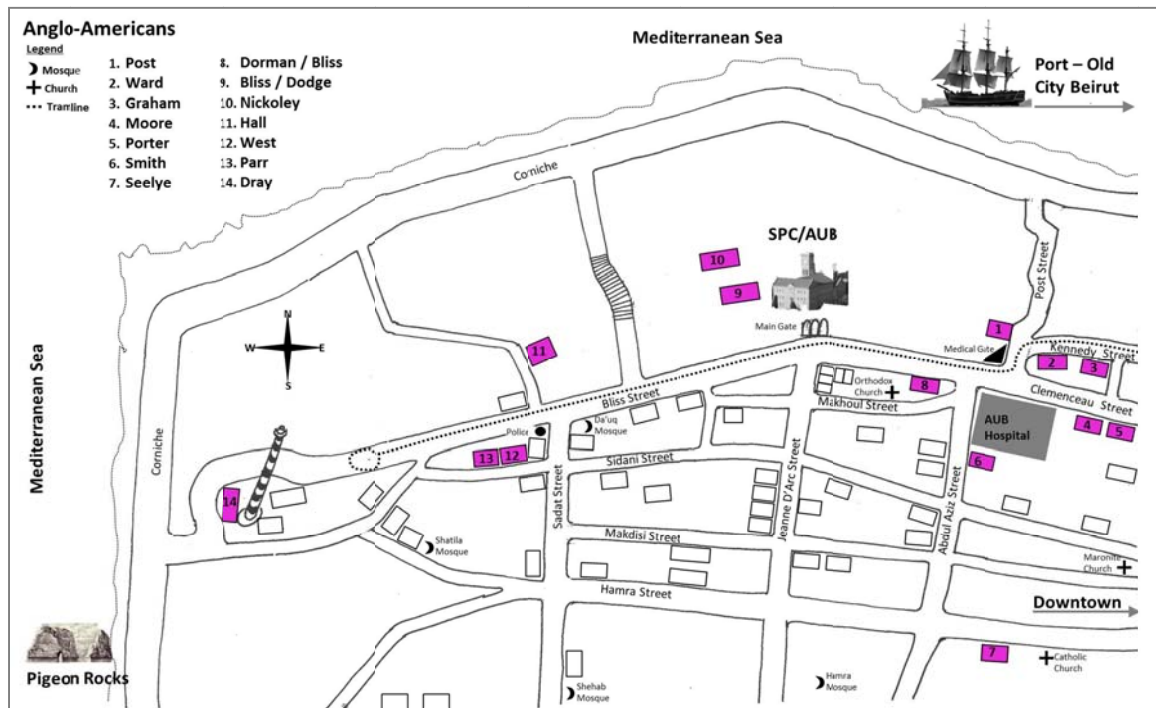


Figure 36 Seelye House on Hamra Street looking west in 1920s



Figure 37 Post Street sign





Figure 38 Map of Lebanon

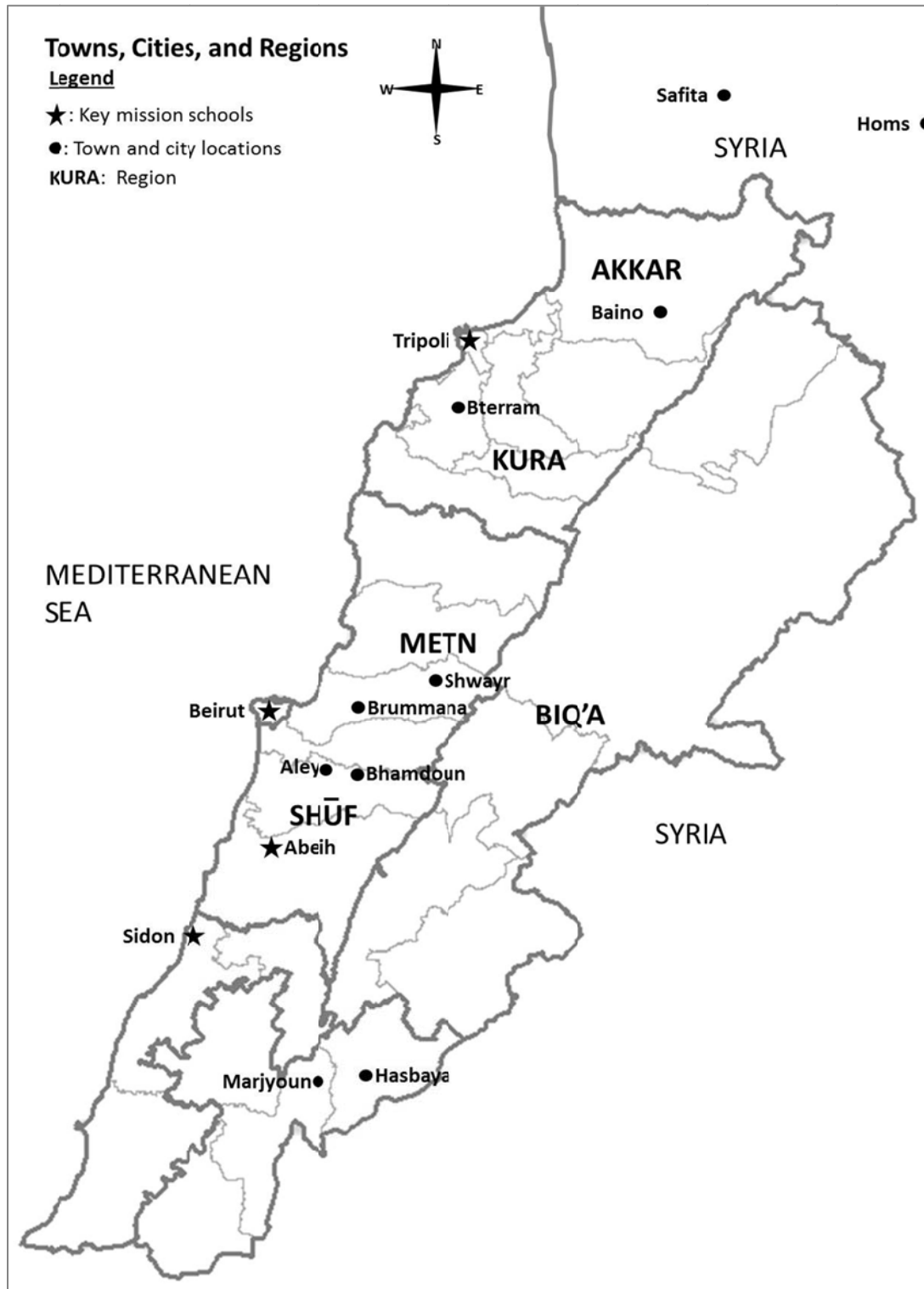


Figure 39 Family connections

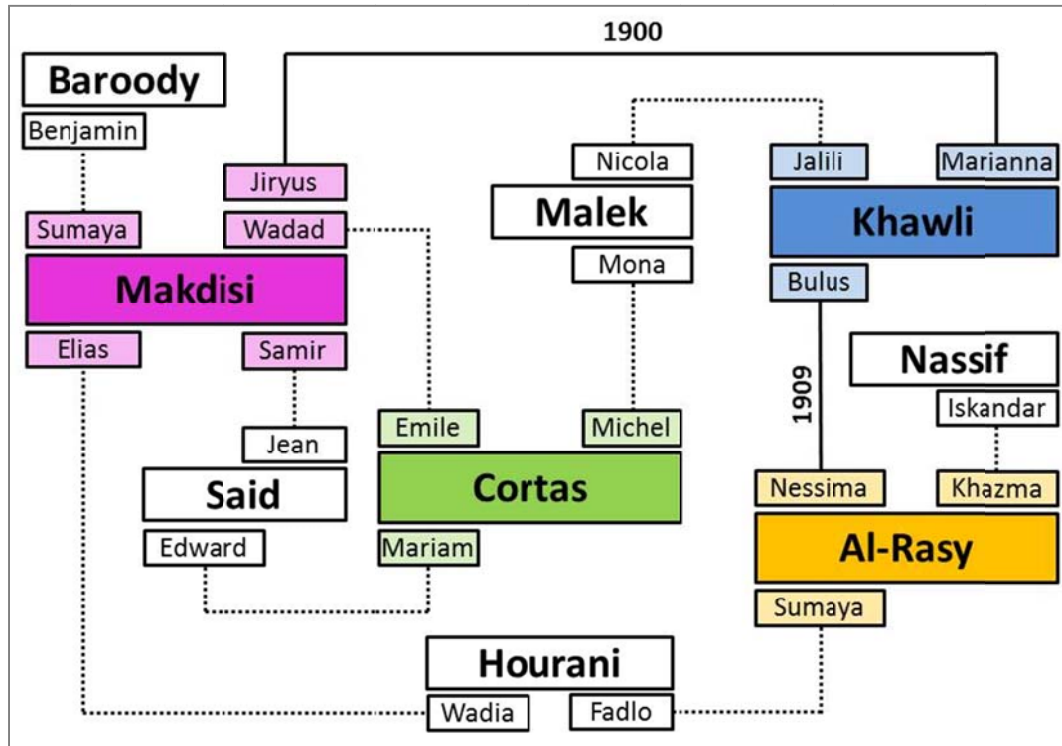


Figure 40 Makdisi family front L→R: Anis (1<sup>st</sup>), Amineh (4<sup>th</sup>), Jirjis (6<sup>th</sup>)



Figure 41 Protestant houses of Ras Beirut

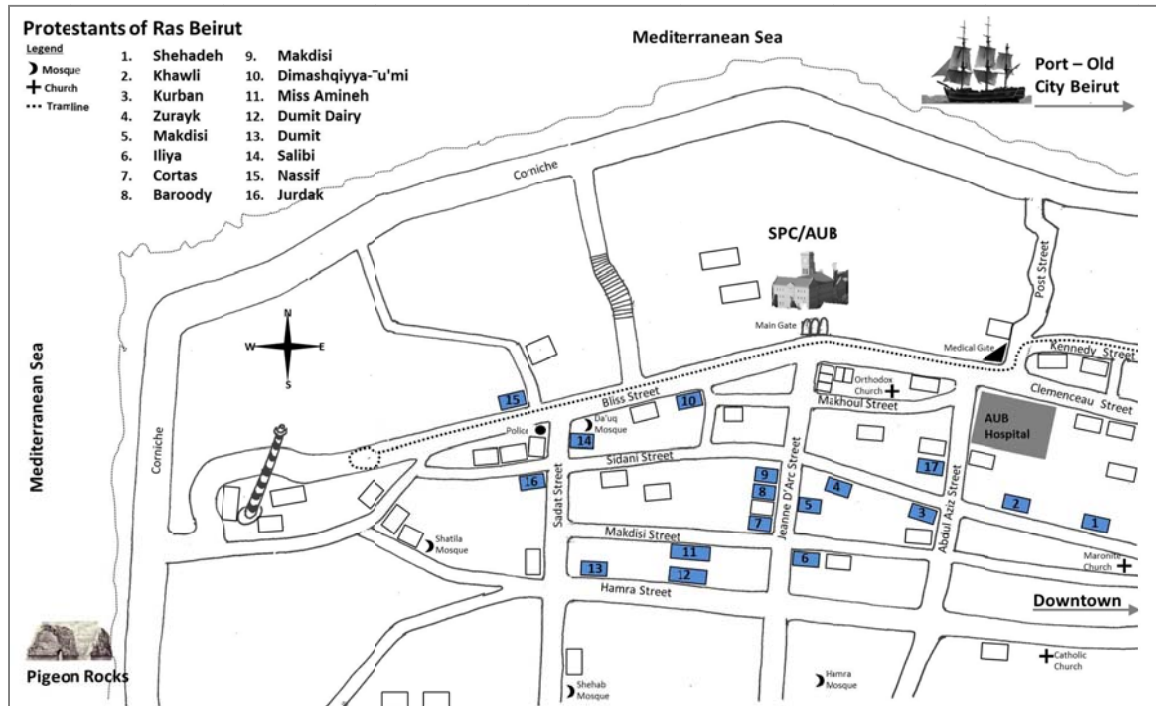


Figure 42 Baroody advertisement

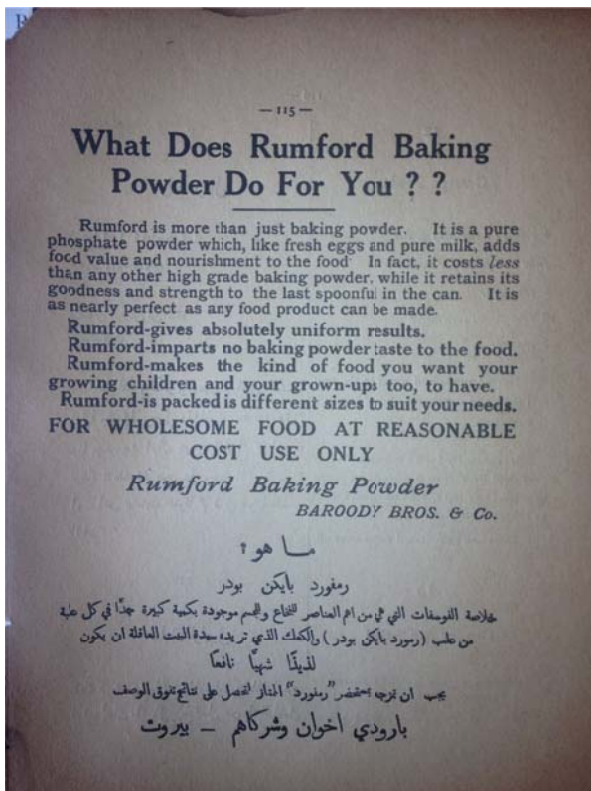


Figure 43 Cortas advertisement


- 48 -

**Buy CORTAS'S Jams, Jellies & Marmalades**  
**Always available at your grocer's**

CONFITURES



**CORTAS**

مربيات و قشريات



Plum  
Peach  
Grape  
Quince  
Cherry  
Apricot  
Mulberry  
Blackberry  
Strawberry  
Orange Mar.  
Apple Jelly  
Quince Jelly  
Hawthorn

شوخ  
دراتی  
عصب  
سفرجل  
بلدیس  
کیوش نوت  
کیوش طابی  
فراند  
نہون  
عصہ تاج  
عصہ زعفران  
عصہ سفرجل

*Beirut, Aleppo, Damascus, Tripoli,  
Lattakya, Alexandretta, Jerusalem, Nazareth, Haifa*



Figure 44 Rebeiz house today



Figure 45 Orthodox Christian -Sunni Muslim houses of Ras Beirut

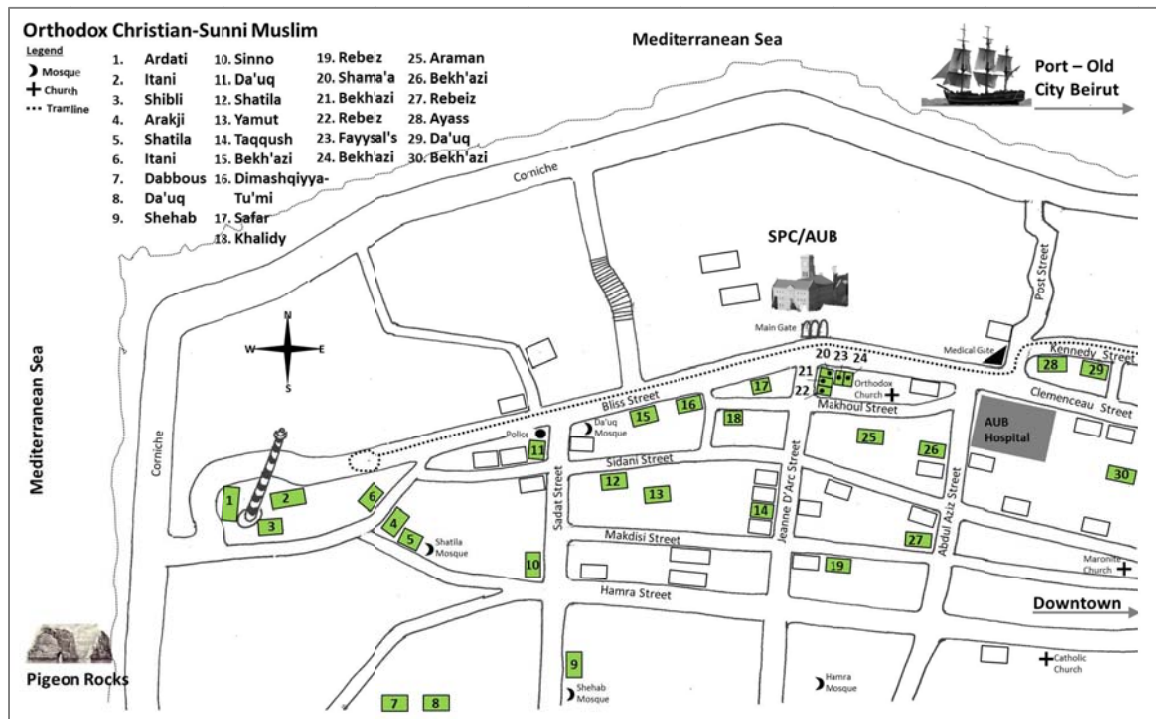


Figure 46 Holiday Inn tower, postwar



Figure 47 Salibi's hamlets

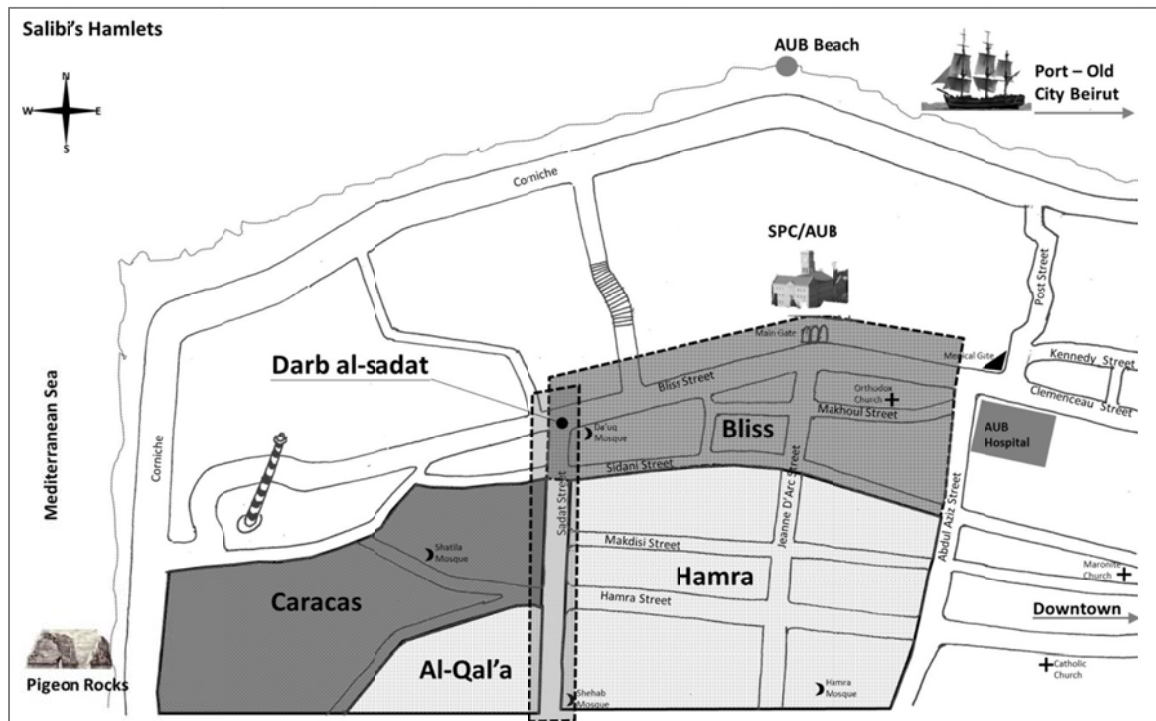


Figure 48 1888 French Map





Figure 49 1920 French Map

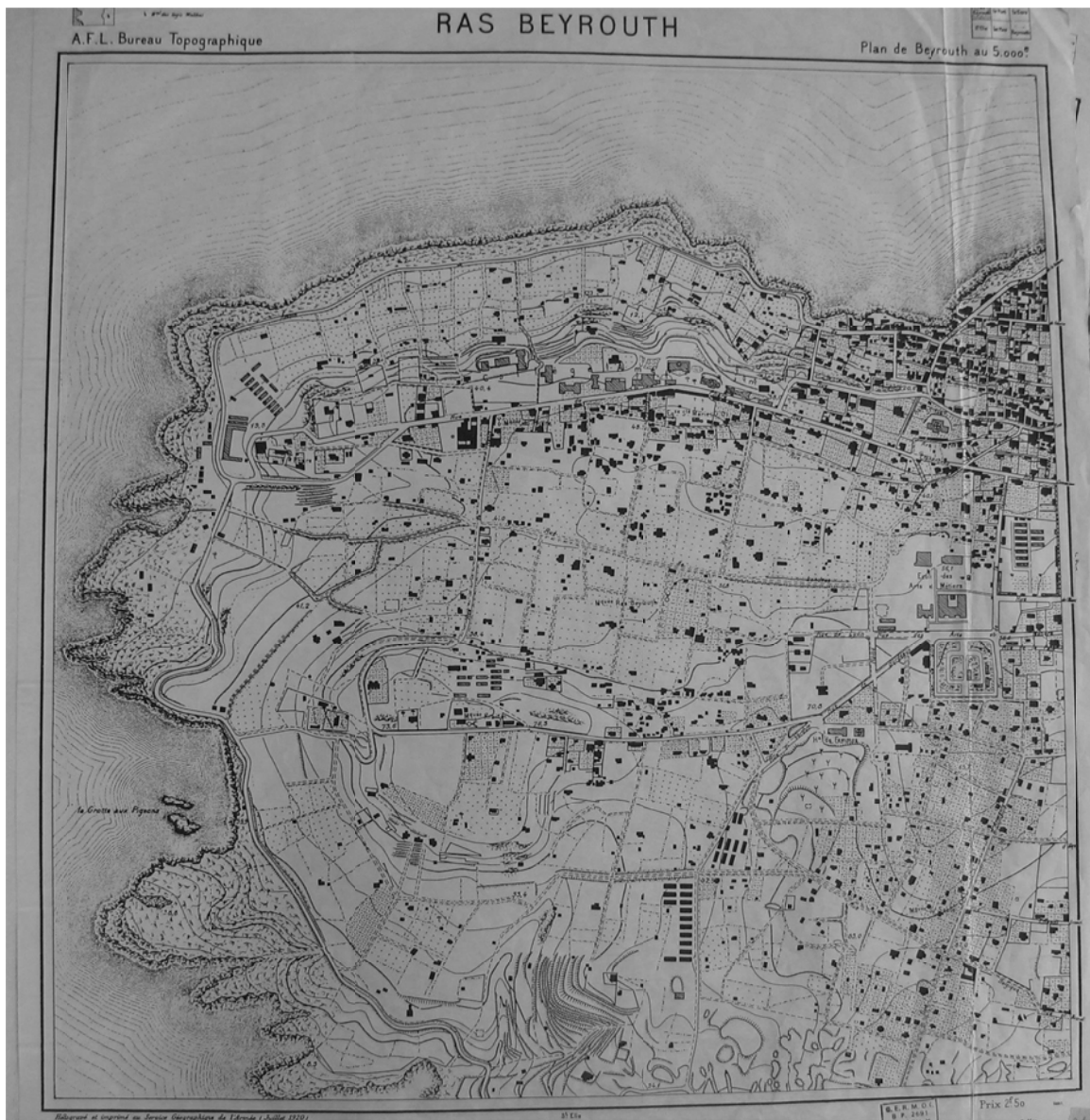




Figure 50 1936 French Map



Figure 51 1938 Aerial photo looking west



Figure 52 1938 Aerial photo from sea





Figure 53 Mansur Jurdak building today



Figure 54 Curtain wall buildings: Horseshoe & Al-Hamra Cinema Buildings



Figure 55 1962 Lebanese Army Map



Figure 56 1972 Aerial photo – *al-Kulliyah*, AUB



AUB Campus and surroundings from the top.



Figure 57 Old/new lighthouse 1956



Figure 58 Bliss Street corner with Socrate/Marrouche early 2000s



Figure 59 Same corner today, Bekh'azi Building





Figure 60 2004 Aerial photo of buildings' shadow over College



Figure 61 Combined houses of Ras Beirut

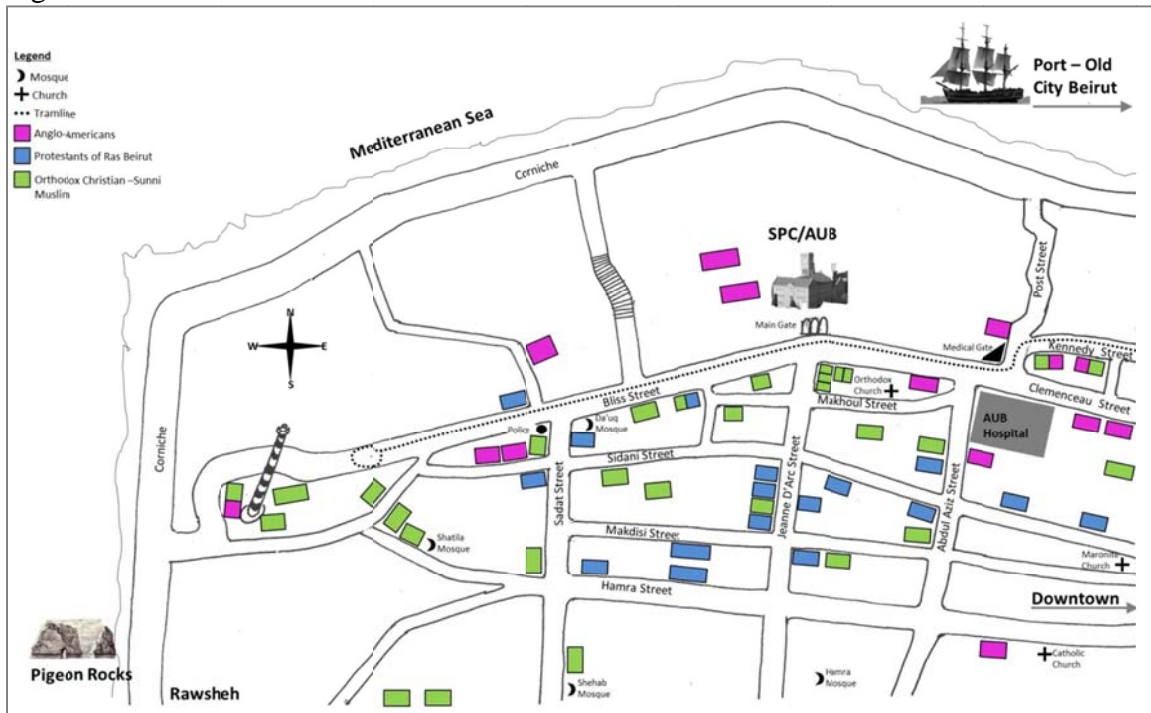
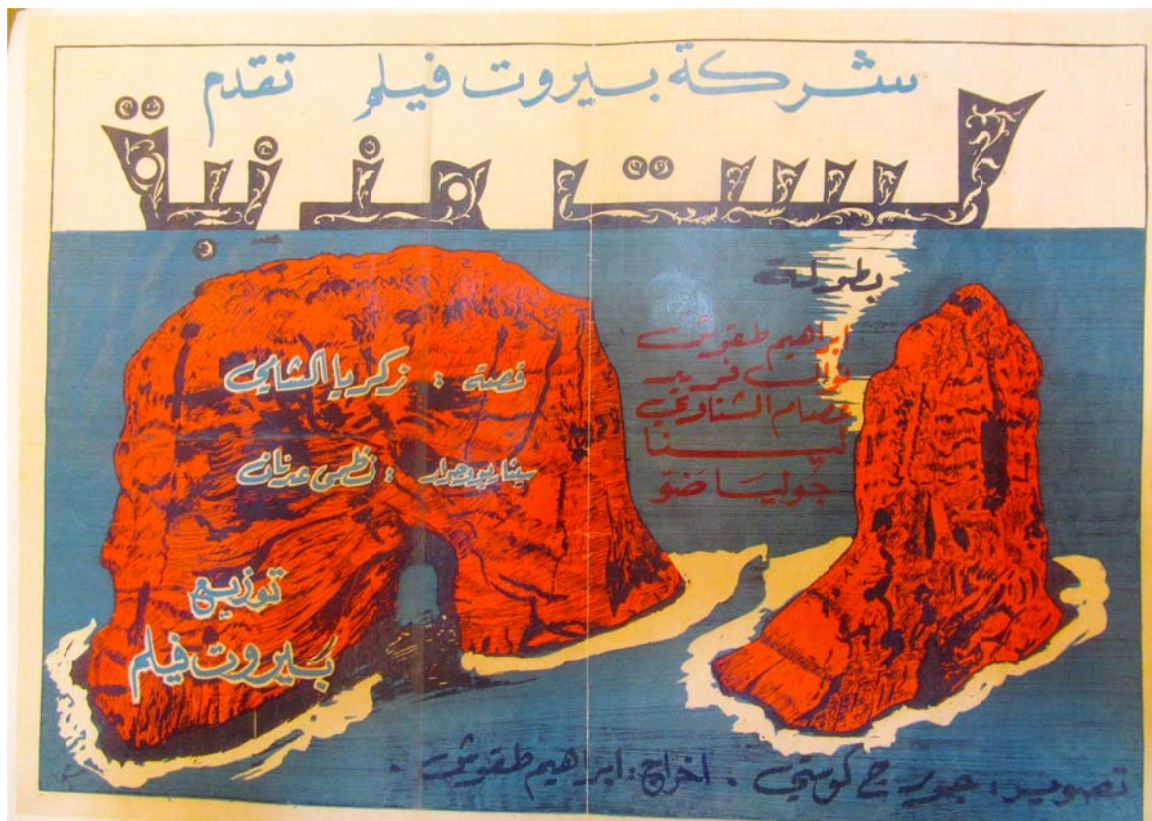




Figure 62 Takkoush's poster for his film *Lastu muthniba* (I am not guilty). Starring Ibrahim Takkoush; directed by Ibrahim Takkoush.



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Archives and Special Collections, Mount Holyoke College (ASC/MHC)  
Archives and Special Collections, Smith College (ASC/SC)  
French Cultural Center Library, French Institute, Beirut, Lebanon  
Beirut, Lebanon  
Lebanese National Archives, Beirut, Lebanon  
Near East School of Theology, Beirut, Lebanon (NEST)

### Seminar

Abunnasr, Maria Bashshur. "Ras Beirut Oral History Seminar," University for  
Seniors, Neighborhood Initiative Project, American University of Beirut.  
November 9-December 21, 2010.

#### Seminar participants:

Catherine Bashshur  
Ebba el-Hajj  
Zelda Deeb  
Mariam Mobassaleh  
Cynthia Myntti  
Hilda Nassar  
Umayma Nasser

### Interviews and conversations

#### Protestant:

Dr. Ra'if Nassif, November 25, 2010 (medical doctor)  
Mr. Nabil Adel, October 21, 2010 (real estate)  
Mrs. Leila Faris Baroody, November 26, 2010 (fundraiser, educator)  
Mr. Raja Baroody, December 2, 2010 (import-export entrepreneur)  
Mrs. Mona Baroody Damlougi, December 3, 2010 (educator)  
Dr. Kamal Salibi, November 17, 2010 and December 8, 2010 (historian, professor)  
Mrs. Mariam Cortas Said, May 26, 2011 (intellectual)  
Dr. Fuad Sami Haddad, March 27, 2012 (medical doctor)  
Dr. Raja Iliya, April 2, 2012 (professor of engineering)  
Mr. Fadlo Bulus Khawli, January 26, 2011 (business manager)  
Mrs. Nida Makdisi Ma'alouf, March 17, 2011 and April 7, 2011 (artist)  
Mrs. Sumaya Khawli Nawfal, March 1, 2012 (homemaker)  
Dr. Samir Shehadeh, March 5, 2012 and March 13, 2012 (medical doctor)  
Dr. Nadim Cortas, February 10, 2011 (medical doctor)  
Dr. Sami Cortas, February 8, 2011 (hospital administrator)  
Dr. Raja Hajjar, April 12, 2012 (educational administrator)  
Mrs. Angela Jurdak Khoury, May 10, 2010 (educator)

Dr. Samir Anis Makdisi, April 10, 2012 (professor of economics)  
Mr. Tony Manasseh, February 8, 2011 (businessman)  
Mr. Khaled Al-Rasy, March 7, 2012 (contractor, engineer)  
Mrs. Wadad Salibi, April 30, 2012 (music school administrator)  
Mr. Antoine Nawfal, January 18, 2011 (publisher, educator)  
Mrs. Mona Chahine Khawli, February 9, 2011 (homemaker, charity work)  
Rev. Habib Badr, May 10, 2012 (pastor)  
Dr. George Sabra, March 16, 2012 (professor, administrator)  
Ms. Mary-Averett Seelye, May 8, 2010 (dancer, educator)

Greek Orthodox:

Mr. Bahij Bekh'azi, September 27, 2012 (real estate)  
Mukhtar Michel Bekh'azi, September 15, 2012 (jeweler and mukhtar)  
Dr. Nuhad Daghir, March 29, 2012 (professor of agriculture)  
Father Germanos El-Hajj, September 25, 2012 (priest)  
Dr. David Kurani, April 12, 2012 (artist, professor of art)  
Mr. Michel Rebeiz, October 4, 2012 (store owner)  
Dr. Mounir Shama'a, November 30, 2010 (medical doctor)  
Professor Samir Khalaf, March 12, 2012 (professor of sociology)  
Mrs. Angel Najjar, October 8, 2012 (homemaker)  
Mrs. Nabila Houry, June 11, 2012 (former teacher, homemaker)  
Ms. Vera Shwayri, November 29, 2012 (secretary)

Sunni Muslim:

Mr. Ibrahim Takkoush, September 17, 2012 (florist, movie actor)  
Dr. Ibrahim Dabbous, May 12, 2011 (medical doctor)  
Mr. Ali Dabbous and Mrs. Anbara Da'uq Dabbous, May 17, 2011 (businessman)  
Mr. Sa'ad Dabbous and Mrs. Awatif Sidani Dabbours, December 12, 2010 (pilot)  
Mr. Sa'ad Da'uq, September 26, 2012 (real estate)  
Ms. Hikmat Itani, May 20, 2011 (educator)  
Mukhtar Abdel Basit Itani, September 24, 2012 (mukhtar)  
Mr. Sa'adedine Ghalayini, September 19, 2012 (real estate)  
Mr. Rashid Koleilat, December 17, 2010 (international administrator)  
Mr. Kamal Abu Ziad Shatila, October 2, 2012 (real estate)  
Mr. Abu Khalil Yamut, October 5, 2012 (shopkeeper)  
Mukhtar Moheiddine Shehab, December 17, 2012 (mukhtar)  
Mr. Suleiman Bakhti, December 21, 2012 (publisher)  
Mrs. Leila Da-'uq Idriss, February 14, 2013 (homemaker)  
Mr. Assem Salaam, March 1, 2011 (architect)  
Mr. Amin Da'uq, June 9, 2011 (educational administrator)

Other:

Catholic: Mr. Philip Safar, September 14, 2012 (barber)  
Druze: Mukhtar Akram Oud, September 27, 2012  
Maronite: Mr. Victor Shibli, October 11, 2012 (lighthouse keeper)  
Shi'ite: Mr. Khalil Bedeir, December 18, 2012 (barber)

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